Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

TERRENCE GEORGE LEONHARDY

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy

Initial interview date: February 29, 1996

[Note: This interview has not been edited by Mr. Leonhardy.]

Q: Today is the 29th of February, Leap Year Day, 1996. This is an interview with Terrence George Leonhardy. So, shall we begin?

LEONHARDY: Sure.

Q: Could you tell me when and where you were born, first?

LEONHARDY: I was born in Williston, North Dakota, on a historic date, June 28, 1914, connected with Sarajevo.

Q: Oh yes, St. Vinton's Day.

LEONHARDY: Well, it's the day that Archduke Ferdinand...

Q: Yes, but that's St. Vinton's Day. Could you tell me a bit about your family?

LEONHARDY: Well, my father came from a pioneer family. He came out there just after the railroad came in. I brought along to share a thing about the hundredth anniversary of the little town. Anyway, my great uncle started a business out there, a mercantile business (before the railroad even came in) out of a tent and then he built a big, huge department store. My dad's family came out from Wisconsin, as had my great-uncle, and settled in that area. My dad worked for my uncle. In fact he was up in the - we were right near the Montana border and the Canadian border - my uncle had a branch store there and my dad went up and managed that. Had to learn Sioux because he had to deal with the Sioux population there. He was born actually in Wisconsin - Elma, Wisconsin - and my mother came up to North Dakota from Iowa. She was a music teacher and came out to my home town and worked in this department store that my great-uncle had and that's where they met. That's how it all started. This was a railroad town; it was on the Missouri River with a big roundhouse and the whole thing.

Q: Had Lewis and Clark passed by there?

LEONHARDY: Oh, sure. Right near, within about eighteen miles was historic Fort Union, which they restored here a few years ago, which was started by John Jacob Astor in 1829. After that, they established another fort, right after the Civil War, which was manned right up to the turn of the century. It was called Fort Berthald, where they had soldiers stationed for marauding Indians. I grew up in that town. It was a good place to grow up in. You stepped off our front porch and you were in the country. Then, when I was fourteen, I was more interested in athletics than scholarship. As I was a sophomore in high school, however, I developed an infection in my leg from basketball. This was before they had antibiotics. I experienced a long history of surgery. I came close to the brink several times with this thing. By the time I started healing up, I had lost two years of school. Athletics were out of the window for me, so I went in for scholarship.

Q: Had your early schooling - elementary schooling - been sort of one room schoolhouse type thing, or was it...?

LEONHARDY: No, it was a pretty good-sized school. At that time, it was the only high school in the county so country kids came there, small town kids came there. So it was a pretty good-sized school. In fact, when I graduated, we had a hundred and three graduates.

Q: That's a good-sized class. When did you graduate from high school?

LEONHARDY: I graduated in '33.

Q: Thirty-three, which was not a very good year to get out and...

LEONHARDY: Well, I was going to add to my boyhood... At the time I had all my illness, we had a terrible drought out there. It was in the dust bowl. And then on top of that, we had the Depression. It was really a bad time. We lost our home. We lost - my dad had been in the automobile business at that time. Anyway, going on to college presented a problem, but because I did have good grades, I managed to get a scholarship and I went to a junior college; a state-run junior college in the eastern part of the state, which was some four hundred miles away. And then from there I went to my state university.

Q: This was at state university of ?

LEONHARDY: University of North Dakota. There, the first two years, I had a full scholarship; it included food and the whole business, but the second two years I had to do a lot of work. The first year I was there, my junior year, I stayed in a boxcar. It was a caboose. The university had a lot of these things put together and put a little heat in them. It was a terrible winter and an awful experience, but at the time, my whole objective was to get educated.

Q: What field were you working in ?

LEONHARDY: Well, that's another thing. When I was languishing in the hospital for many months, I started doing a lot of reading. And that's when I first got interested in the Foreign Service. And my objective then was to try to get into the Foreign Service.

Q: Had anybody ever said anything about the Foreign Service to you? I mean, did you know anybody ?

LEONHARDY: No, not really. I just happened to read about it and got interested. When I was at the University of North Dakota, I did take economic courses and political science. Then I went on from there. I had good grades at the university and went on to Louisiana State University to get a Master's in business administration.

Q: What got you going all the way from North Dakota down to Louisiana State?

LEONHARDY: Well, at that time I was really hunting for... I didn't have the wherewithal to... I had to find a school that would give me a fellowship sufficient to pay everything. I had a scholarship to Harvard, I had one to Northwestern; but they were tuition scholarships and I still had to eat. So LSU (Louisiana State University) gave me the whole thing.

Q: This was Huey Long's time, wasn't it?

LEONHARDY: It was just about two years after he was assassinated when I was down there but they still had the legacy. Long really babied that institution; he brought in a lot of professors.

Q: He really did; he turned it into quite a university.

LEONHARDY: Brought in a football coach...

Q: But also even, despite the football, it also was educational too. What did you take at LSU?

LEONHARDY: I took courses designed for foreign business, and so forth. I took some political science courses, of course

Q: Were you picking up any language at this time?

LEONHARDY: Yes. I took Spanish at North Dakota. We didn't have it in the first two years and then I took Spanish at North Dakota and then again, in graduate school, I had a couple of years of Spanish.

Q: Well then, so you got your Master's at LSU when?

LEONHARDY: I got it in 1939; it was still during the Depression and you were faced with the military; with the possibility of being drafted and all that stuff. But I tried to find a job - any type of a job. I first took a job with Standard Oil of Louisiana which was a temporary job just to keep going and then I had another job up in a little town called Picayune, Mississippi. That was in foreign trade, exporting a lot of... They were in the naval stores business, exporting pine oil and turpentine and all that to Europe. Our markets started drying up as Hitler moved into these import countries. So the market sort of dried up and I thought, "Well, that do I do now?" So I took a job teaching, went up to Illinois and worked at nun's junior college, Springfield Junior College, in Springfield for a year. Then I went with the Jesuits to the University of Detroit and I taught accounting there for another year.

Q: Were you a Catholic?

LEONHARDY: Yes. There in the summer session and that's when I applied to get in the Foreign Service and they weren't giving the exam, as you may know. So then I went in as an auxiliary officer. I'm sure you've interviewed people...

Q: Yes. Could you explain though, because this is not just for me but for others, what the role of the auxiliary officer was - and this is about what? '42 or...?

LEONHARDY: '42. An auxiliary officer did the same things as a Foreign Service officer. You know, I was sent to a Consulate and I was told, "You're going to do this."

Q: When you came into the Foreign Service, this was '42, had your leg kept you out of the military?

LEONHARDY: Yes. I got a 4-F. I tried to get in the army. I even applied to get in but I didn't...

Q: I would imagine from what you said...

LEONHARDY: And I probably wouldn't have gotten into the Foreign Service if it hadn't been for... you know, they were short of people. I thought sure they were going to turn me down. The Navy used to do the exams down on Constitution Avenue - the physical exams - and they, for some reason, passed me.

Q: Well, tell me about coming to the State Department - your experiences. You know, your first... Here you'd been hearing about this and thinking about this but all of the sudden you're up against the monster. How did you find it?

LEONHARDY: Well, the funny thing happened when I was in Detroit at the university and they sent me an upper berth passage down here on the train to be interviewed and I was interviewed by what was then, I guess, the Director General of the Foreign Service. You know, it was a small operation down on Pennsylvania Avenue and I had written my thesis in the university in Louisiana on Louisiana rice and foreign trade and so this guy (I'm trying to think of his name, the guy who interviewed me...)

Q: It wasn't Homer Byington, by any chance?

LEONHARDY: No. I knew Homer quite well; I served with him later. This fellow became Ambassador to, I think, Hungary, right after the war, but I can't remember. Anyway, they interviewed me and were going to make an assistant agricultural attachï¿½ out of me. They sent me to the AG man in the Department who was on loan from the Department of Agriculture and he said, "Well, where did you get your AG degree?" And I didn't have one, so then they sent me back and I was interviewed by Walton C. Ferris. I don't know if you've ever heard of him.

Q: Well, I've heard the name.

LEONHARDY: Yes, well, he was a real character. In fact, when I live here in Washington, his widow lived right across the street from me.

Q: What was his background?

LEONHARDY: Well, he was a Foreign Service officer who was in charge of the auxiliary officers. Anyway, he interviewed me and said, "Well, we're going to make a vice consul out of you, and you've got Spanish, so we'll probably send you to Latin America." And so, I finished my work at the University of Detroit and had gone out to North Dakota, when he says, "We'll write you out there." Oh, but then we got in the matter of salary. I had had a Civil Service rating of three thousand dollars a year, so I brought that up, but he was only willing to offer me two thousand. And I dickered on that for a while and they finally raised it to twenty-five hundred - only orally, however. since I didn't have it in writing. Anyway, he says, "You'll get a letter telling you where you're going to go," and so forth. I went out to North Dakota, where my father was still living, and received a letter telling me to come to Washington and authorizing me to take the train. But I could only take the train from Deshler, Ohio, since that is where I was staying when I was brought from Detroit for the initial interview. And they wouldn't pay my way from North Dakota all the way to Washington. So I would have an upper berth and I wouldn't have to stop over in Deshler, but that's all they would pay. So anyway, then they told me I was going to Barranquilla, Colombia, and so I got here in Washington. But the salary they showed in the letter was two thousand. So when Walton C., when I met him in the Department, said, "Well, we want to swear you in right away." And I said, "Well, we got a little matter of salary to get out of the way." He finally looked at his files and found out that they had initially offered me more and so he upped that. And then I went to a training course, they were grooming me to work on the proclaimed list of bloc nationals, in other words, the blacklist.

Q: The blacklist of Axis...

LEONHARDY: But when I... And we had a short course of about a month and I stayed in a professional fraternity house on Wisconsin Avenue. It was near Georgetown University. And I attended that, and I then started down to Barranquilla. I took the train down to Miami and then took the old Pan American Airways Clipper. And I'll never forget that trip because the windows were blacked out - they had things over the windows. We stopped in Cienfuegos, Cuba, and Jamaica on the way down (Kingston) and then Barranquilla. There was nobody there to meet me, I remember that. Esso had a big operation up river and they would meet the plane every day because they had all this - or three times a week - to get their people off. So the guy I was sitting next to on the place said, well, he was being picked up by Esso and if I didn't get picked up, they'd give me a ride. There was only one place to stay in Barranquilla at that time. It was a big hotel, Prada Hotel. We had a pretty good-sized consulate.

Q: Before we get to that, I'd just like to go back to your Washington experience. How did you find... In the first place, what was your impression of the State Department, the Foreign Service, and what you got from that?

LEONHARDY: Well, I was all eager-beaver, you know. Everything looked fine to me. The people I talked to seemed to be very nice. I didn't have anything to compare it with and so I was just anxious to get going, you know. A funny thing, right in the middle of this, before I left here, Walton C. Ferris called me in one day, and he said, "We're thinking about changing your assignment." And I said, "Yes, where do you want to send me?" And he said, "We're thinking about sending you to Orsorno, Chile." And I didn't know where in the devil Orsorno was.

Q: I never heard of it.

LEONHARDY: I thought it was in the middle of the desert. It turns out it was in the middle of the Lake region and it was a beautiful city, mostly Germans, and I think it was just a one-man post and I found out later the reason they were thinking about sending me was there was another guy that they brought into the auxiliary who had been in Barranquilla, Colombia, in the shipping business or something with his dad, and he wanted to go back to Barranquilla so they were going to do a switch, I guess. But they never did it and I ended up in Barranquilla. As I say I was, you know, everything impressed me as being great.

Q: Oh, yes, sort of wide-eyed. Same way I felt when I came in. Well now, in Barranquilla, before we get to the consular, could you describe sort of the city and the life and what was the situation there?

LEONHARDY: Well, the situation was pretty... First of all, you're in the tropics. You're working six days a week, eight hours a day and we were in the same office building with CitiBank, the United Fruit Company and with the Singer Sewing Machine Company. These guys all got off at two in the afternoon; they didn't work on Saturdays, and so forth. When I first got there, you know, I thought they'd put me working on the blacklist but they had two Foreign Service officers there; they had two auxiliary officers and two Foreign Service officers. The two Foreign Service officers were working on the blacklist. That was something that was really sacred that they wanted to do that. So the Consul we had there said, "Well, we're going to put you in charge of passport operations and the visa." In other words, pure old, simple, consular work, plus I had all of the consular invoices which you know you had to have when you exported stuff and all that, and seamen, if you ever... We didn't have any American seamen at the time; only non-American registry boats came in.

And then we had a non-career vice consul. Have you ever heard of that category? Well, we had one. He was a guy that had been there for about eight or ten years and he got what they call statutory home leave and he did all the accounts. The accounts were done on a typewriter about three feet wide and all kinds of little divisions and columns. But anyway, he left, he went off on home leave and the idea was that he was going to come back but he never came back. And the Consul turned the accounts over to one of my friends who now lives here in Bethesda, named Henry Dearborn, and Henry didn't know anything about accounts; numbers really bothered him. So his accounts were in a kind of a mess when he was transferred to Manta, Ecuador, which was a stroke of luck for me because you couldn't get an apartment in Barranquilla unless you got on a waiting list. But he had a furnished apartment so he offered the apartment to me and let me buy the furniture and gave me one year to pay for it.

Q: You weren't married at this time?

LEONHARDY: No. I got his maid and there was a guy upstairs that worked in the consulate from the Navy Department. He was my roommate and I had another one upstairs who was in the consulate so we'd pool our food and eat together, and so forth, so I just fell into that very luckily. But anyway, getting back to the accounts, finally he was assigned to Manta, Ecuador so the Consul took it over and he wasn't any better than Henry, and then finally he came into me one day and he says, "I noticed from your curriculum that you taught accounting." And I said, "Yes." He says, "I'd like you to take over the accounts." This was in addition to what I was already doing. And so it was a pretty heavy workload. And then, I was there about a year when I picked up an amoebae and in those days, local medics were really not worthwhile but there were a couple of German refugees, man and wife, that examined me, took no tests at all, they just looked in my eyes and interviewed me separately and they said, "Well, you've got an amoebae." So they put me on umpteen injections. Some years later I was treated for the same thing up in Bethesda Naval Hospital and took umpteen and they wouldn't even let me out of bed, it's so hard on your heart and everything. But I went to work every day. But there wasn't much to do in Barranquilla. First of all, you didn't have much time to do anything anyway. You'd get home exhausted from work.

Q: I wonder if you could tell me a bit about Barranquilla. What it was doing and what it was like at the time - and also a bit about Colombia at this time. We're talking about... You were in Barranquilla from when to when?

LEONHARDY: From '42 to '45. Two major ports on the Caribbean, one was Cartagena and the other was Barranquilla - the major port being Barranquilla. Everything that went into Barranquilla by boat went up thMagdalena River. Anything that went into the interior went up the Magdalena River, and most of it went up by these paddle-wheelers although some of it was carried up by air. It was, you know, a busy port and that's where, of course, the Clipper started.

Q: We're talking about the Pan American Clipper ship. It was a flying boat by Sikorsky.

LEONHARDY: Exactly. Four props on it, I believe. Anyway, we had a lot of visa work there because people would come in to Barranquilla to go to the States. That was the place they took off. There was no direct flight from Bogota or any other city at that time to the States.

Q: Bogota was really kind of out of it, wasn't it?

LEONHARDY: Yes, well, anyway, we had a small sub-post over in the guajerra as they called it; it was a lookout post for German subs and all that stuff. And we had a vice consul who used to hang out over there. In the dry season, he'd come back to Barranquilla once or twice during the year. And a fellow named Chad Barjeotty, whom you may have heard of, he was over there for a while. But anyway, there was a succession of vice consuls over there because they couldn't stand it. It was just rough going. They finally closed the post. We had these American groups down there, that I mentioned, and then we had a lot of petroleum people down there looking for oil, exploration types, and this apartment building I lived in, it was mostly all those kind of people, they lived there. They were out in the boonies all the time with their gadgets looking for oil. Then upriver, Exxon had a big refinery at a place called Barrancabermeja and they also had an oil field and their people were mostly Canadians - it was a Canadian subsidiary of Exxon. And they would come through the office to get their transit visas to get to Canada so we had a lot of... Politically, there was nothing much going on in Colombia in those days except that we were chasing the Nazi sympathizers and a lot of Germans had become Colombian citizens, you see, so they were... Our people were working on the proclaimed list, the bloc nationals list...

Q: I wonder if you could explain a bit because this is one of those stories that gets lost. The Foreign Service is very much involved in Latin America with this blacklist or looking... We had a lot of concern about, particularly German but some Italian interests in Latin America. And could you explain what kind of work we were doing, I mean, we were trying to do this and all that?

LEONHARDY: Well, as I say, I was not involved with the issue directly, but the idea was to try to trace exports, money, and everything else, that was going to the "other side" from these people and I never got directly involved in it. I was supposed to be involved but I never got involved. And then once they were found to be trading with the enemy, of course, then you'd put them on a list and then anybody that traded with these people, and so forth, would be added to the list. We had a lot of submarine activity in the area and we had a naval patrol; a U.S. naval air patrol that would patrol the coast. They even used a blimp down there for observation. Then we used to have a re-fueling unit there for the ships that needed to get from New York or the East Coast of the U.S. over to the Canal. Frequently it was these PT (Patrol- Torpedo) boats that they'd send out to the Pacific. Eleanor Roosevelt came down there when I was there. The wives of these petroleum people didn't have anything else to do so they rented a house, it was like a little place where these people could gather.

Q: A USO, almost?

LEONHARDY: Just like a USO. It wasn't really, but Eleanor came down and went out to that place. We took her and she looked at one room and said, "Oh, I see a poker table." And then Henry Wallace came in there one time on one of his trips but, otherwise, we didn't have too much in the way of dignitaries visiting the place. After I was there for about a two years, we had Merle Cochran, who would later go on to become Ambassador to Indonesia and then head of the World Bank but was then our Inspector, come out there and he was a nut on the account side of things. I had been on the accounts for about six months or something and he looked at what I had done and he commended me and then said, "But, you know, before that, I can't figure out anything that happened." So he asked me to go back and do an audit of the previous people who'd done the accounts in this period.

But anyway, we didn't have too much to deal with in the way of visitors. But the last year we were there... Well, I'll go back, these people, the doctors, told me the only way I was going to get any relief from my amoebae problem was to go up to the States. And, of course, since that was before the '46 Act, we had no such thing as being evacuated for illness or anything, and so I tried to figure out how to get back to the States. I was issuing priorities, among other things, on the Clipper, but I couldn't issue one for myself. So somebody put the idea in my head that I could sign on as a "work away" on an American ship, but there weren't any American ships. Finally, the ships started coming in. And the Consul - we had about three different Consuls while I was there, - he was very friendly disposed, said that if I could get a Captain to take me aboard, I could take off some leave so I signed on as a "work away." The Captain of the boat had never been off the Great Lakes before and he was worried about submarines. So we didn't go over and catch a convey out of Panama which was the usual thing. His worries were not unfounded, since, just about two months before that, we'd had a Colombian ship that had been sunk right off the mouth of the river there and the only people who got off were two members off were the American gun crew and a Colombian sailor. And they got off because they put their cot right under the life boat so, when that thing started to go down, they could jump straight into the life boat. Anyway, this Captain called me up on the first night, just as we were leaving (the sun was starting to go down and the blimp had left us) and he said, "This is the worst time of day. They can see us and we can't see them." And he says, "Have you been assigned a place in a life boat?" I said, "No." "Hey, assign this man a place in a life boat." And he says, "You sleep with your clothes on. Anything can happen." And we took off right across the middle of the Caribbean towards Cuba. The Captain knew where we were going, but we didn't know. Anyway, I slept that first night - I didn't sleep very much - but I went down to the sickbay and spent the night there and then the next day I got a cot and put it under the life boat so I would be ready in case of an emergency.

But anyway, the only place you could go from Barranquilla, you know, if you wanted to get a holiday on a Monday or something, was to get two days off, and then go over to Santa Marta and take a ferry boat to a place called Fugacion, which was in United Fruit Company area, and then you'd take a train into Santa Marta. After that you'd take a taxi up the side of the mountain, and there was a little motel up there where you could stay in and you could rent a mule to ride around on. Or you could go down to Cartagena; it was the only paved road they had outside the city, which is quite a historic place. We'd go down there once in a while. Then one time, one of these Navy pilots I met at one of those place where you had recreation at the hotel - where they had dances on Wednesday night and Saturday nigh - well I got to be a friend of his, and I said, "I'd like to fly in one of those things, one of those Grumman fighters. So he says, "Well, if you get an official excuse, I'll take you for a ride." So we used to pick up our mail down in Cartagena that came surface from the Navy. So he said, "I'll fly you down there." So I went. A flight in one of these Grummans, I tell you, I was... He decided he'd have fun with me, you know, he went up pretty high and then dove, you know, and did all these maneuvers. But anyway, at one time I decided to go to Bogota and I got a couple of weeks off and I took an old Junker's pontoon plane up the river and put in at these ports, you know, they'd unload mail and passengers. They were just a four or five place plane. Up to Barranca where EXXON had their oil operation; they had golf courses and the whole thing. I played a little golf. Then I took a paddle wheeler up the river to a place called Porto Bello then I went to Medellin. I stayed in the country club there for about three or four days, played a little golf and rode horseback and then I took a bus over to the rail line in a place called Parrejo and went over to Cali then came back on this Italian autoferro. You had to take a taxi over the mountain and then on to Bogota. Spent about a week there and then came back to Barranquilla. But anyway, you had a feeling you had to get out of here for a while and so that was what you could do. I think I went over to Santa Marta about three times and got to Cartagena.

Q: Did the Ambassador to Colombia ever come down?

LEONHARDY: No, we had very few people from Bogota that ever came down there. I met him, his name is Arthur Blisslane. Anyway, then we had one of the officers from the Embassy who was assigned as consul for a while, a guy named Daniel Anderson. But anyway, when I went up to the States (it was late in the assignment) working my way up on this... My main job on that ship was to take the rough log, write up the smooth log, but I also swept the floors a little bit. Anyway, when I was up in the States, I went to my home town in North Dakota and my dad saved up a lot of shotgun shells for me so I could go out pheasant hunting.

Q: Because we're talking about the war time, of course, so the supply of shells was limited.

LEONHARDY: I came down to Washington and talked to Walton C. Ferris and he said, "Well, we're thinking about assigning you to Europe somewhere, you know, after the War you'll be going in." He says, "We'll send a letter down." Well, I kept getting these different letters assigning me, first, to Naples and then to Warsaw, but I had to wait to go into Warsaw when things were propitious. And then they said first go to Naples, then London. And then they sent me up to the States working on a special project over behind the White House there. It was in a temporary building. Then I was interviewed again by Walton C. Ferris. Well, I had my dad get me all kinds of heavy clothes for Warsaw, Poland. He went into the local men's store and got all these heavy coats and jackets and stuff, while I started studying the Polish language - not taking formal lessons but I was studying Polish on my own. And then one day, I was flirting with a girl in an elevator that worked in the old Walker-Johnson building there (I'd met her at a party the night before) and I asked her if she was busy. She said, "Oh, I am terribly busy." I said, "Well, maybe I could come up and help you." I was just kidding her. The next thing I knew, I was getting a call from Walton C. Ferris and he said, "You know, her boss called me and said he thought you didn't have anything to do and he was looking for somebody." He says, "While I had your file out and (I'm trying to think of his name, he was Director of the Foreign Service) called and said he needed somebody in Denmark, Copenhagen. So I called Arthur Blisslane. He said he'd release you." Anyway, the next thing I knew - Ferris was very demanding - he said, "At such-and-such a time, you've got to go at such-and-such a place. So the assignment was changed to Copenhagen. So I went off to Copenhagen. I left New York on the last convoy going to Europe and I remember they gave me a foot locker full of those - you remember, those big thick regulations - heavy as hell. Plus my own personal effects. We get over to Cherbourg and we were supposed to be unloaded by German prisoners of war but for some reason, I don't know why, we stayed overnight onboard the convoy. The next day there weren't any prisoners of war but we had all these UNRRA (UN Relief and Rehabilitation Administration) people and Quakers and everything else plus State Department people. We stayed in... where there was an empty troop ship. We stayed up in the sickbay and then from there...

Q: Excuse me but when did you make your crossing?

LEONHARDY: It was in May. Just a few days after the war was over.

Q: May, '45 then.

LEONHARDY: As I say, we were in a convoy. The war was over but there were still subs around that hadn't gotten the word, I guess. So I had to take a full troop ship, but since they were gone on recreation over to England, we were left to sit around London and wait for them in order to get out to Denmark. Finally, they shipped us up on a military plane up to Stockholm. The Embassy in Stockholm had got me on a train down to Malmo, Sweden. Then I took a ferry boat across and, I remember, I got ready to go on the ferry boat with all this luggage and stuff. When I went out the landing with a taxi and I had no Swedish currency left. And I thought, "How in the hell am I going to get this stuff on the boat?" I also didn't realize that I had to have a ticket to get onboard. But anyway, this ferry boat was full of Danish refugees - Jewish refugees - coming back from Sweden - so they has all these Swedish Boy Scouts out there helping them get on and they just took me along and put me on the ship too. And so I went into Copenhagen and I was met by a friend of mine who lives over here in Virginia - a Foreign Service officer.

Q: Who's that?

LEONHARDY: He's a guy you ought to interview probably - Gray Bream.

Q: All right, I'll try to get him.

LEONHARDY: He had an interesting career, too. He was a political officer at the Embassy.

Q: Well, now, I always like to get at the beginning of an assignment. You were in Copenhagen from when to when?

LEONHARDY: I was there from May of '45 to February of '49.

Q: This was really a month or two after the German occupation had ended in Denmark. What was the situation in Copenhagen and Denmark when you arrived?

LEONHARDY: Well, it was very interesting because when I got into the harbor of Copenhagen, I saw all these German boats, you know, with the black cross (the Iron Cross) on them. And there were still a lot of Danish underground people; members of the Resistance. All they had was armbands to identify themselves and they would take people off the streetcars once in a while, and so forth. And we were first housed in the office. First of all, where we resided, we were still under SHAFE (Allied Headquarters, Allied Forces Europe), under Eisenhower, and we were resided in the Hotel D'Angleterre which is still one of the oldest, fanciest hotels in Copenhagen. No hot water, however, and we ate (since we were under the British too) in a British mess. It was pretty tiresome stuff because it was lamb stew, you know, about twice a day but, at least, we were allowed to eat our breakfast in the main dining room. We could sign a chit for it and I was there for, or living in that circumstance, for about three or four months, I think it was. Although I was in the D'Angleterre, there was still nothing - at the restaurants, you had to use coupons for mostly everything, even to get an egg for breakfast. Everything was on ration and the Danes, I was told during the war, it was considered patriotic to eat all you could eat to keep it away from the Germans. But after the war it was unpatriotic to eat all you could eat because they had to export to get foreign currency to buy things they needed. And they were terribly short of coal, everything was heated by peat, which was brought in from the islands. It stunk to the high heavens and it was- (end of tape)

And we had no hot water even in the hotel. They would come with a big pitcher and pour it in the bathtub. That was true even when I left there in '49. We had hot water in the apartment buildings about one weekend a month. But anyway, housing was a real problem there, since the Danish housing control would only let somebody sublet for six months. Then you had to move someplace else. We were constantly out of touch with the Department. At the time, I was assigned to the consular section and Consul had never had any consular experience, so he was pretty dependent on me. Then we had nobody running the accounting section. We had some wonderful Danish employees, just top flight, that would been working - some of them were working with the Swiss, some of them were re-hired after the war. They were just terrific people who you could just rely on them, you know.

But anyway, I had to do the accounts, but I didn't do the job by myself; this guy had done it, but I was the responsible officer for the accounts, and for the visa section, and for the passport and citizenship section. One of the tough things we had at the time was we had about, oh, around fifty women, I'd say, who were mostly Americans that had married Danes before the war and received dual citizenship under Danish law. During the war the Germans tried to make a model satellite out of Denmark and they even had an election there in about '43, '44, I think it was. And the National Socialist Party, of course, the Nazi Party in Denmark, was on the ballot with candidates. And these women, or at least most of them, went in and, as Danish citizens, they voted for the opposition party to the Nazis. They thought that was their patriotic duty. Well, what they were doing is losing their citizenship.

When these women came in for citizenship services; they wanted to go back to Baltimore or New York for a visit after the war. I'd ask them, "Did you vote in the elections?" "Oh, sure I voted." I'd say, "I'm sorry, you've lost your citizenship" Anyway, we had to go through the throes of taking their citizenship away but, eventually, they got special legislation through Congress restoring it. It was a kind of a difficult situation, however, and I was in that consular section for a couple of years. In total, I was there for four years until I was moved up to the commercial section. I had a very valuable Danish employee at the time, he was very knowledgeable about his country, his English was passable, and we used to bombard the Department of Commerce and the State Department with a lot of economic reporting. Then I was lucky in another respect. Shortly after I got there, there was another fellow who was an auxiliary officer. He didn't last very long but he came in for about a year, I think. And we were able to get a Danish cook who, with her husband, had had a restaurant in Weehawken, New Jersey, before the war. After her husband died, she came back to Denmark, and got stranded by the war. She knew all kinds of American recipes and she had good connections with people, with suppliers of food, and so forth. She also knew a ship chandler's wife who furnished food for all the ships and Danish merchant marines. So I was very lucky; she was just a wonderful person and she kept house for my apartment, and did the cooking and everything else. Well, she was just a...

Q: Well, who was the Ambassador then?

LEONHARDY: Oh, the first Ambassador we had was Monette Davis, that was the name I couldn't think a while ago. And he was in the Minister rank. Our first office was in the old Legation building, right near the National Palace and it was where Ruth Bryan Owen had been Minister to Denmark.

Q: The daughter of William Jennings Bryan.

LEONHARDY: And then Monette Davis was assigned as Consul General in Shanghai, I think, and then he was succeeded by a political ambassador, I can't think of his name, he was from Delaware [Editor: Josiah Marvel, Jr. took up his duties as Ambassador February 27, 1947]. His wife was the first wife of that famous financier, Jock Whitney. It was during this time that the Marshall Plan started, of course, and we had all this influx of people coming in to run that program. It's funny, the first head of the Marshall Plan was a guy named Marshall. Anyway, we moved from this small, old legation building which we couldn't even begin to fit into and we rented space in an office building that had been the Gestapo headquarters and had been blown up by the Resistance - a side of it had been blown off and was later repaired, and that's where we moved our office. We were there all the time; I was there all this...

My second apartment was within walking distance of the office and I walked by Hans Christian Andersen's statue every day in a park, and so forth. Then I had to get a new apartment because I had to move again, and I relocated out into the suburbs. During the first part of my assignment there, I got a car, a Chevrolet, that was shipped. It cost me $996, I mean a new Chevrolet out of the factory. I got that shipped over to me. So I did a lot of traveling around Denmark, and so forth - got to know the country.

Then it was very dreary up there and, of course, especially during the winter, the area was suffering from lack of heat. One winter it got so cold that they couldn't get the peat boats in, so they just turned the heat off and we got kerosene heaters from the Embassy. I had a fairly big apartment at the time, but still managed to heat up a couple of rooms. That was one of those smelly, old kerosene heaters. Then about springtime around March or April, I started having the feeling that I had to get out of there because we had been up there all winter, at the same latitude as Hudson's Bay, and hadn't see much daylight during that entire season - dreary. So I got on the Nordic Express and I went south. You had to take a train across from the Island of Sjaelland over to the mainland and then go down to Paris. It was a kind of a difficult trip because you'd have to get out at every border, get out of the gall darn train and go through customs, and so forth, and then get back on the train. And if I didn't see the sunshine in Paris, I'd just keep going until I got to Madrid. Then I drove down several times clear down into Italy, and so forth. Had some very interesting trips. But, I don't know if you have any other questions...

Q: On the consular work, the Danish jews who came back from Sweden, were many of them heading for the United States or not?

LEONHARDY: Not at that time. They'd had their businesses and their homes, and I think they were real anxious to get resettled. One of the problems we had was that the Danish underground visa quota was very small and we had a waiting list a mile long and then we had a lot of visitor's visas we issued. Of course, there were no planes going across the Atlantic at the time and you had - everything was by ship. In fact, I went on home leave, my first home leave, I went over on the old Gripsholm, which was the exchange ship, and amongst the passengers was Greta Garbo. Then I came back on another Swedish... You had to go take a train up the coast to Gotenberg, that was the main port. You had to go up there to catch the ship in that North Atlantic run. It was about a ten day trip. Of course, since I don't get seasick, I enjoyed the trip but a lot of people... Then I came back on the Drotningholm. Both those ships were decommissioned not too long after that. Then I went over on the famous Stockholm that had the wreck with the Andrea Doria, the next time out. But it was a very pleasant assignment. The Danes did not encourage you to learn Danish; it happens to be a fairly ugly language. They have no tolerance for accents but I made an effort anyway. Most educated Danes took English from grade school up, and of course, they have their international language so it was not a problem. But I made a lot of Danish friends, enjoyed the...

The second Ambassador we had, the first Ambassador I should say, because Monette Davis was a Minister, was a guy named Josiah Marvel from Delaware. He was there until I had left. Our DCM at the time was a guy named Garrett Excursion who later went up in the Service and other places - a nice guy. But my first boss in the consular section - a guy named Sheldon Thomas - as I had already mentioned, hadn't done any consular work, and shortly after he was given the position - it wasn't more than about six months, I think, or eight months - he was reassigned to Iceland and then we didn't get a single consul general who knew what he was doing. It was about shortly thereafter that I went upstairs to the commercial section.

Q: What part did commercial work...? What were our commercial interests...?

LEONHARDY: Well, we had to do the standard reports you make on the companies - Danish companies. Then we did a lot of reporting. Well, out of Commerce, you know, they had crazy demands on you. One I'll never forget, was the market for human hair in Denmark. You just got flooded with these requests. But we did it with the help of this able Danish assistant. We also did a thorough job on the Danish merchant marine. They wanted a report in Washington on that. We got a commendation for it, and so forth. But it was mostly these regular commercial reports that you do on - like Dun and Bradstreet - on the firms and stuff, we did a lot of that. There wasn't much commerce between the two countries at the time.

Q: Were you seeing at the beginning of something that became quite popular later, the Danish furniture market there?

LEONHARDY: Yes, they beginning to... The Danes, of course, at that time were famous for their silverware, Georg Jensen of which I bought a set of while I was over there. They were famous for their two ceramic factories, Bing and Groendahl and the Royal Copenhagen. Interesting, in those days you had to have consular invoice for everything and if it was an original work of art, it was non-dutiable when it got to the States. I could have made all these little artists, old people out in Bing, Groendahl and Royal Copenhagen come into the Embassy and swear that they'd done this little bird or this little vase or something but, instead, I went out to the factory and delivered their oaths in person. I had to give them an oath in Danish so they wouldn't have to do that.

As far as recreation is concerned, we had a good group at the Embassy. They formed what they called a Chancery Club and they'd have a big dance. They'd rent a hall and they'd have all the Danish employees and American employees and we'd have a band. I remember Victor Borge came to one of our planned things and entertained for us. So we had a fairly good social life. Then I did go to the... The Ambassador used to get these free tickets to the concert hall there where the First Symphony... And his secretary used to call me and say, "He doesn't want to use... Do you want to go?" I'd go to a lot of that. Then I'd go to the Royal Danish Ballet; it was the first time I ever got interested in ballet. I never went to ballet before I got there. So you had a lot of things to do to keep you busy.

Q: How were relations with the Danes during this period?

LEONHARDY: Well, very good, I'd say. When the Danish government was finally formed after SHAFE disappeared there, they were always... You can ask Gray Bream; he was the political reporter but I think they were very good, very friendly disposed. And Denmark, as you may know, is one of the few countries that has a Fourth of July celebration.

Q: I've heard of this.

LEONHARDY: It's over on the mainland and I went to one of those in a place called Rebild Jutland. They had the American flag flying and they have Fourth of July speeches and everything else. Of course, there are an awful lot of Danes that migrated to the States and there's a natural empathy there between the two countries so we never had any serious problems that I know of while I was there - any political problems.

Q: I assume that doing consular work, protection and welfare, wasn't a particular problem at the time?

LEONHARDY: Not big. We occasionally had a few things but most of the problems we had were with American seamen coming over and getting drunk and... Then the other things we used to do... We'd go to the "Land of Milk and Honey" which was Sweden; we'd catch the ferry boat over there and buy stuff. All the Danish employees would ask, "Can you buy me a shirt? Can you do this?" because everything was wide open over there, you know. You couldn't get anything in Denmark. I remember one of the first batches of oranges came in, people were in line. When chocolate came in, people were lined up for miles to get their ration of this stuff.

Q: Well, you left there in 1949, is that it?

LEONHARDY: Yes. I was assigned to Madrid. I had home leave and then I went off to Madrid.

Q: You were in Madrid from when to when?

LEONHARDY: I was in Madrid from spring of '49 to early '55. That, without a doubt, was my best post. Everything was just... First of all, the climate was a lot better. I had enough command of Spanish so that helped. And I went over on an Italian ship - I think it was the Vulcadia - to Gibraltar. That was where we had to get off and then I bought a new car before I got to Madrid; a Pontiac. I drove it out of the factory out in Detroit and had it on board. It was unloaded in Gibraltar and then, I remember, I had to wait three or four days in Gibraltar before I could get out of there to get into Spain. We went through all kinds of... Anyway, I remember when I was in Gibraltar, I had to go over to the border with Spain and I had to drive across the main airport, the runway, to get over there and I didn't realize they'd flushed all the gas out of my car practically and I almost got stalled on the way back. But anyway, I went through our customs agent that the embassy used for stuff, he asked me if I wanted to take out insurance on my car. And I hadn't thought of that, of course. I said, "Yes, I don't have any pesetas." He says, "Well, that's okay. We'll send the bill to the Embassy." I took out insurance and I drove up to Seville and stayed overnight there in the famous old... hotel and then the next day I drove to another stop on the way, one of these paradores but I was up in the Montes de Mancha, south of Madrid and there was practically no traffic on the roads. Gasoline was rationed, and so forth, except for trucks and stuff and I'd been passing people with ox carts and donkeys; some would be on the left side some would be on the right. I'd slow down and go around them.

I got up on La Mancha, about sixty miles south of Madrid and there were two bicyclists on the left side of the road and I came upon, got close to them, and I slowed down and they were on the left side so I decided to go around them on the right side. I wasn't going very fast, maybe thirty miles and hour and one of these guys cut in front of me. So I couldn't go the left because the other guy was there so I had to go to the ditch. Fortunately, it was in La Mancha where there were no trees on the side of the road because usually the European roads are lined with trees. I hit this sort of ditch and rolled the car over on the left side. I rolled down the window and climbed out and I had grazed this cyclist and he was hopping around on one leg and holding the other leg and screaming to high heaven. His bicycle had been damaged and the other guy just kept going and nobody came along on the road. Fortunately, I'd traveled in Spain with a car before and had a... Some guy came along, finally, from the North going South with his wife and a child and he asked me what happened. And I told him, he says, ""Well..." I said, "Can you bring this cyclist to the village and get some medical attention?" And he didn't want to do it and he say, "That guy caused that accident, he can just suffer," you know. I persuaded him to take the guy in and I said, "Report this to the Guardia Civil, the Civil Guard, because they patrol the road." Anyway, in about, oh, ten minutes another guy came down from the North. He was in a chauffeur-driven car; he was a Black; he was a nice-looking, well-dressed guy, American, and I'm sure to this day, he was the famous arms dealer, (I forget what his name was) he was supplying arms to all over Europe. Anyway, along came a truck from the other way, it had two Guardia Civil on it; had the truck driver and a couple of aides and they stopped right at my car. All the oil had leaked out of it. Anyway, the car wasn't too badly damaged; it was stove in a little bit on the side and the roof but it had the split window, you know, and the windows were shattered. Anyway, this truck driver roped my car to the back of his truck and pulled me into Madrid and the Guardia Civil were there and they made a little note of the accident, I guess. I got into Madrid and he got some - oil and everything was rationed pretty severely - but this truck driver went in to this old filling station and put oil in this car. I think I had enough gas but anyway, I got into Madrid with a shattered windshield. Fortunately, I knew the city a little bit so... Eventually I got the car fixed.

But the Embassy in those days was in a... We still didn't have full relations with Franco - and the Chargï¿½, a guy named Paul Culbertson. We were in an old Catholic school house complex that we'd rented. So I was assigned to the economics section and I was assigned to do reporting on Spanish minerals and a number of other aspects of the Spanish economy. We were there for about three or four months - at least six months, I guess, in that building - and then we went into houses that the Germans had had on the main drag there. The Chancery was in one building and the commercial section was in some other and the administrative section was in another house right next door. And that's where we were a good part of my assignment there. We had a property we'd bought where the Embassy is now which was an old home in the middle of big grounds around it which they eventually built the Embassy but it wasn't finished when I left there. And then comes the Marshall Plan and the military base agreements and all that stuff.

Q: Was that happening while you were there?

LEONHARDY: Yes.

Q: You say we only had a Chargï¿½, this was, of course, during the high Franco regime and before we had...

LEONHARDY: That was a result of a 1946, I think, UN resolution that none of the signatories to this thing would send an ambassador to Spain. We had this Chargï¿½ and then we gave them full recognition and our first ambassador had come from... He'd been in the Argentine and Poland; he was a political appointee; he owned Brentano Bookstores and he was Chairman of the Board of Metro Goldwyn Mayer. He was a guy named Stanten Griffins. Griffins had gone through a number of wives; he wasn't married at the time and he brought with him Angier Biddle Duke whom you probably read about this Spring; was killed in a... He wasn't the DCM he was a second secretary, I think, but he was sort of one of his main aides and we had, I'm trying to think who was the DCM at the time. Homer Byington, I believe, while he was there as DCM, but I think it was Johnny Jones who was DCM and then in 1953 we had Homer Byington. Once we got the Marshall Plan going, we brought in a whole new bunch of people to work on that and they had me - my first boss was Daniel Braddock and Nelly Turbick was second - he lives around here. And then they sent over a man with the rank of Minister - a lawyer from South Carolina but via New York. He was in a New York law office - Ned Williams - we called him Mr. Ned anyway and he... At that time, I was reporting on minerals amongst other things and then we got into this whole business of stuff going behind the Curtain, minerals from mercury and pyrites and stuff that were getting into Eastern Europe.

Q: The Spanish minerals played quite a role during World War II - wolfram. I'm not quite sure what wolfram is but I know it was a very important commodity that you wanted to keep out of German hands.

LEONHARDY: It's used in the steel industry. I got into a lot of things because I'd been reporting on minerals amongst other things. Then we had, during the Korean crisis, they put on a big demand on us and sent two recently hired officers who were not full-time, I mean not Foreign Service officers - sent two people over to do all the reporting required on these... We had to go to every country in Western Europe where we had to put them on rationing, in effect. We asked, "What is your use of this product which we import?" And then we had to figure out - we had a history and then we had to figure out how much we could give them or sell them. I think there were almost a hundred different products that we had to report on, which was quite a task. I started it out, but with the idea that I was going to get these guys in and they were going to run it. Well, after the boss, Ivan Hoyt got the first two reports out of these guys, he says, "Hell, they can't even write English. You're going to have to take over and monitor everything they do." He says, "I'd thought you'd be through with it but you're not." So we had to do that.

Then we had, as I say, we had the base agreement and we had to buy minerals from Spain and we had all these contracts for wolfram, for mercury. And it got me into the secret mercury mines and installations down in the middle of the country. Spain and Italy produced about ninety percent of the mercury produced in the world and they had a monopoly before the war. Then they split up and it's the only mining operation in Spain that was exclusively the domain of the Spanish Treasury. It had been were operated by the Romans. They were very interesting, historically. The radius of twenty-five kilometers around this place, only people born in that area could work in the mines or the distillery. You may have heard about mercury poisoning but it's just horrible stuff and before they had ventilation and all that stuff. And these people were only required to work one day a week in this mine and they were given land outside so they could be out there farming and they'd work their one day. This was all written into a big law and women used to come from outside and have their babies in it so they could grow up working in the... Anyway, they put in a new distillery while I was there but it was a very inefficient operation. But I went down there twice with mining engineers from the States. They were just bug-eyed when we got down in those mines and saw how rich that ore was. Even during World War II, they produced as many as seventy-five thousand flasks a year. Here if a mine operation produces ten flasks a day, you know, it's a big deal.

Anyway, then I got into - we bought land also. We had to do a lot of negotiating with the Spanish Government on these contracts and with the individual mining company. Then we had one American who came over there with a lot of political whammy from Nevada and he had authority to go out and contract on his own and he was paying more than we were paying - were negotiating at. I remember I got a telegram back. This guy liked to entertain people. He had me over to his house and buttered me up but anyway we got his contract canceled. He was a protï¿½gï¿½ of this Senator McCarran.

Q: McCarran of Nevada who was a major figure in...

LEONHARDY: He had all kinds of influence in Congress. Anyway, we got this canceled. And then he tried to get me thrown out of the Foreign Service. As a result he tried to find something, he went around... I mentioned earlier that my dad was involved in politics in North Dakota. He was a Democratic county chairman during the Roosevelt Administration. Truman was coming through there, while I was home, and he says, "I want you to come down and meet the President." I says, "No, I can't do that, I can't get involved in politics." Then he said, "Oh, but I'm having some Republican friends down, and so forth, and the President is just coming through." He was really upset that I wasn't going to go; he pleaded with me. Finally, I said, "Okay, I'll go." And I went down and somebody took my picture shaking hands with Truman on the back of this train. I don't know how this guy got wind of it but he tried to get me thrown out on the grounds that I had participated in a political rally. Fortunately, I had good friends back here in Washington that were rooting for me and I didn't have any problem but I was worried because it was during the McCarthy era and a lot of things were happening.

Q: Back to the mineral business, did you see a problem of Spanish concerns diverting minerals toward the communist bloc?

LEONHARDY: Well, that was an interesting thing because I worked very close with the British intelligence officer and they had little consulates all over Spain including Cartagena down in southern Spain; several of the ports where a lot of the minerals went out and he would give me lists of stuff, shipping documents showing where this stuff was destined and it was always purchased by a firm in England, so you assumed it was going to England but actually the destination of the ship was Antwerp and then they'd show Vaduz Liechtenstein was another place where stuff was... The Spaniards had no knowledge of this, you know, they assumed that this stuff was going to go wherever it was supposed to be going and so we would... I had pretty good relations with the Department of Commerce people and they didn't want it to go there. They didn't know and I would just feed them stuff, you know, and there was some effort, I think, to do something about it. But a lot of it was, as soon as you plug up one hole, while then they'd find another one, you know, some other port they'd go to. And they say, "Well, this is going to Antwerp, in Belgium." But we knew it would end up somewhere else so we had a bit of a problem convincing them that the stuff was going back there because they didn't have any information to that effect. Their information indicated everything was a-okay.

Q: How about dealing with the Franco authorities? How did you find working with them?

LEONHARDY: One interesting thing in dealing with the Franco regime was that, my last year or so there, we were trying to get our hands on a source of uranium and we were going all over the world looking for it. Our people here (I'm trying to remember what agency sent them over)... Anyway, we got two mining engineers came over from the States - young guys - and we worked out an arrangement with the Franco regime to let our people with their Geiger counters, and so forth, explore with two Spanish engineers in the area north of Madrid - anywhere in Spain north of Madrid. And that wasn't really the primary area we were interested in. We knew from geology reports that the best geology was south. Anyway, I had to work and do most of the negotiating with the Spanish Government agency to work this thing out where our people could come over there. They'd go out, I remember it was in the summertime, and Spanish engineers, they took off during the summer on vacation. They didn't like this idea but our engineers were very able guys and they'd fan out. There actually were three of them. They'd fan out in different directions and they'd come in every weekend and report and then they'd go out again. They had jeeps assigned to them and the Spanish government was very cooperative in assigning people to help them, and so forth. Then we tried to negotiate and see if we could further south and the head of this particular agency in the Spanish government was a hard nut but I managed to crack him pretty well and we were able to go further south. We kind of moved out about half way to the Mediterranean. So our people were able to go down there and all they were doing was looking, really, for... They didn't come up with anything very big but anyway, it was part of an effort worldwide to try to find sources of uranium. So we had good cooperation from them and I might say, in the mercury mines, they hadn't let anybody in there (I signed the guest book and they hadn't had anybody in there for twenty years - just us.) That was a different department of the government, that was under the Treasury and I had to go and negotiate going down there. We had a Defense Mineral Procurement Agency in London and they had an American general in charge of it and a mining engineer and I worked with them but we negotiated these arrangements to go down and look at their lead mines and look at their mercury operations, and so forth.

Q: You were there until when?

LEONHARDY: I left there in the spring o'55 and that was an interesting thing because... I used to do a lot of fishing and hunting in Spain which was just fabulous, including salmon on the north coast under a palm tree and trout fishing west of Madrid and then partridge hunting. I was assigned to Seoul, Korea on Friday the thirteenth of August, 1954, and Jimmy Dunn was our Ambassador at the time. We'd had three different... After Griffins, we had two ambassadors after that I served with. One was Lincoln McVey and Jimmy Dunn who'd come over from Italy. First of all, this guy that was assigned in behind me. Dunn knew about him and he says, "I don't want that guy." So I stayed on for another three or four months waiting until they assigned somebody there. I think it was in January or February, I was out on a partridge hunt in Albacete in a cold, cold day. It was all Spaniards except myself and, anyway, I had a doctor friend with me; he was an ENT (ear, nose, throat) specialist. I started coming down with a fever and a month before I'd had shots at the British-American hospital for yellow fever and everything I needed for Korea and apparently I'd gotten a bad needle because I came down with the damnedest case of hepatitis. It was just terrible. I was just flat on my back mostly for about a month and then I started turning real yellow, and weak as hell, and I had to have a nurse come in and give me Vitamin-B 12 shots every day and I ate just boiled fish and boiled potatoes. I didn't have any appetite. But anyway, right when I was the yellowist, Dr. DeVault, do you remember him, he was the head of the State Department Medical...

Q: Yes, I remember him, yes.

LEONHARDY: Well, he been with Sara DePasco in Peru but he came up and he spent a year or two in my hometown in North Dakota one time so we had some mutual friends. I never knew him he was a lot older than I but I see him once in a while here in Washington. But anyway, he took one look at me and he says, "I understand you're supposed to go to Korea" and I said, "Yup." And he said, "You can't go." He says, "You've got to back to Washington, we got to check your liver; you could have had some damage somewhere." And then about two or three weeks later I go in to the office, I'd been able to get out, to walk around a little; and drive my car over to the office and in my in-basket is a telegram from Korea saying, "Where in the hell is Leonhardy? If he isn't on a ship, get him on a plane, get him over here, we need him." He said he was going to get the word out but he never got it. So we said, "Check with Dr. DeVault." And so my assignment was changed. All I knew is that I was going to Washington. When I received my orders, I had to go down to Gibraltar again and catch a ship out of there. Because I knew the head of our military mission there pretty well, he had me flown down to Gibraltar where I visited with some Spanish friends on the coast for two or three days until the ship came in. But while I was there, I called my immediate boss at the time who was Dick Rubottom. He later became Ambassador and I see him once in a while in Dallas. Anyway, he called me to tell me that they'd decided that I was going to be Officer-in-Charge of Cuban Affairs. And his late assignment before getting to Madrid was he was in charge of Mexican Affairs so he said, "Well, you'll have a lot of trade problems and problems with sugar," and he didn't say anything about Fidel Castro and the political problems. But anyway, so I get back to Washington around July 1955 and right away I'm thrown into this Officer-in-Charge of Cuban Affairs job which turned out to be hectic. I don't know how...

Q: I think we might stop at this point. One question I'd like to ask before we stop on this session. Could you talk about your impression and any stories that you might have about the McCarthy period which ran from most of the time while you were in Madrid, this was high McCarthy period.

LEONHARDY: Well, the only way I can relate to that was when I had my problem which I mentioned earlier, you know, and, of course, that wasn't because I was dealing with a communist or anything.

Q: It was just political. But did you have any people around you, I mean, did this have...?

LEONHARDY: No, I can't think of anybody that was weeded out. We had some people that were homosexuals in the Service that got weeded out while I was there, including the head of USIA, but I can't think of anybody... I remember, when I was in Copenhagen, we had an officer there who had a little trouble one time. (That was before McCarthy, I guess, that was under McCarran Act or something.) But who had belonged to some bookstore here in Washington that was...

Q: Oh, yes, there was a bookstore here- (end of tape)

We're talking about this bookstore which anybody who liked to read joined because they got a great discount and it turned out it was sort of a communist front but it had nothing - it was kind of a socialist -type thing or something.

LEONHARDY: Well, that's the only time I ever heard an officer say he'd been questioned, about that bookstore - called the Community Bookstore.

Q: I'd like to put in here what we'll talk about next time. So we're going to be talking from about 1955 until, how long were you in charge of Cuban Affairs?

LEONHARDY: I was there from July 1955 through '58.

Q: '58. Okay, so we'll be talking about that the next time.

LEONHARDY: You asked me about impressions of the Franco regime, of course. I never saw anything that... We had one political officer that was thrown out for dealing with the opposition when I was there. He lives down here in Florida now. But I wasn't in anything that would... that I was vulnerable to anything like that.

Q: Okay, so we'll pick up in 1955 Washington and starting Cuban Affairs.

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Today is the 5th of March 1996. Okay, we're in 1955. What was the situation in Cuba? When you went there, I take it, it was sort of a quiet spot.

LEONHARDY: Well, as I think I told you before, [unintelligible] while I was down in southern Spain ready to take off, I got a call from Dick Rubottom saying, "Well, you're going to be on Cuban Affairs. You'll have a lot of trade problems, and sugar problems." No mention of any political problems, which is about ninety percent of what actually happened. And so I went to that job - I went home on some leave, I think, and then I started that job sometime in the middle of the summer, I think it was, I can't remember exactly when. We had a layer of bosses, you know, I was on Cuban Affairs and then you had an Officer-in-Charge of Cuban and Caribbean Affairs - I think he had some - and then above him you had an Officer-in-Charge of the whole region, that is, Mexico, Central America, and Caribbean. We had a number of changes during the time I was there in those particular jobs.

Our Ambassador at the time in Cuba was a fellow named Arthur Gardener who was head of a big company called Bande Tubica and he wasn't at the post when I first got on the job. He'd had some kind of surgery and he was a very "poor guy." He only had a big home in Watch Hill, Rhode Island, and another one in Palm Beach and another one here in Washington right up Massachusetts Avenue. He was a very pleasant guy and liked to do practical jokes and all that stuff and he had a DCM at the time named Carlos Hall. Gardener spoke no Spanish and Carlos Hall was fluent and a career man, of course, and they got along like a couple of strange bulldogs.

Anyway, when I first got on this job, we had political problems in Cuba with Batista and we were trying to push him, as we did for many years, into bringing about democracy. The Batista regime toyed with this a lot. They said they had meetings with the opposition, towards trying to get them... They even started their parliament again, and got that going and then they'd dissolve it periodically, and so forth. On the political front, that wasn't the major effort, our major effort was trying to get the Cubans to get back to democracy. You may recall that the previous President was a guy named Carlos Prio. Batista came in, I think it was, in 1952, in a coup; he'd been in before and then they reverted to democracy. The democracy got pretty nasty down there as far as corruption was concerned and Prio was not exactly, you know, renowned and esteemed, I should say, by the local populace and it left the door open to Batista to do something which he did, always with the idea that he was going to restore democracy. We were trying to push him that way. I think it was in about that same year that... Anyway, during that time, Fidel Castro got a bunch of his people and they raided the military barracks over in (that was before I got in the job) Santiago which was the chief city in the eastern end of the island. They were pretty well clobbered by the military and quite a few of them killed. Castro, in his usual fashion, wasn't up on the line of fire. He was in the back somewhere and he managed, even though he was the one that really got this thing going, to escape into the mountains where he would later seek refuge. I think it was the Archbishop of Santiago who went to the Government and said, "Well, I'll get him out of the mountains, if you promise to give him a fair trial." And it was at that trial that Castro made his famous speech condemning the Government, and so forth. He and his brother and some of these other guys were sentenced to prison; Batista would have these amnesties periodically and he had an amnesty and let him out. And Castro and his brother and some of his followers went off to Mexico where he really started planning his big revolution.

But this was not on the front burner when I was on the job. I mean, he was over in Mexico and he did come up to the States one time and the idea was he was not supposed to engage in any political activities or anything else. And he no more than got up there and he was collecting money, and so forth, for his revolution. I remember Immigration called me and said he's violated his parole. I said, "Well, toss him out," which they did. On the economic side, we had a nickel plant down there. It was the only thing that, I think, the U.S. Government has ever owned like that abroad. It was established during the War to ensure a supply of nickel and it was on the east end of the island where they have these rich laterite bores that they just skimmed off the top. After the war, we'd turned that over; we leased that out to a national lead company and they made a sort of a lead concentrate which they brought up to the States, it was about sixty percent lead, where it was treated further. GSA (Government Services Agency) ran that thing except for the contract and then we had a separate contract for the mining of this stuff which was about twenty kilometers away. But it proved to be a bit of a real problem before I got off the desk, but at that time I had nothing much to do with it. There was some effort being made to try to sell it, you know, to get out of there but it required all kinds of Cuban legislation to give it like a new industry, and so forth. Then we had... Ex-President Prio was allowed to go back to the country and he and a former president named Raos San Martine were constantly pressuring the government and sub rosa they were doing all kinds of funny things. Then Prio claimed he was about to be arrested so he left the country and he arrived in Miami in shirtsleeves and all that stuff. We paroled him in with the agreement that he wouldn't engage in any activities that violated our sacred inter-American agreements which meant you can't go to our country or any other country and plan a revolution. But the ink wasn't dry on that one and he was already started, you know. He was doing all kinds of hanky-panky out of Florida.

He had gotten a lot of money out of Cuba before he ever left there so he had a lot of people with money that were supporting him. Then the Castro invasion occurred in, as I recall it, around December '56. At first, the Batista regime just said that they were all captured, you know, or killed and, of course, that wasn't the case. Some of them were killed and a few of them were captured but Castro managed to get up in the hills with some of his followers. And then they said, "Well, we got him surrounded, he can't do anything, and we're going to close in on him." And that didn't happen either. And shortly after he got there, he became a hero to the people opposing Batista, you know, here was the guy who was going to do it. A lot of his followers were people that were sympathetic to him, went up to the mountains and joined him and he got bigger and bigger and finally he sent his brother, Raoul, up to the northern part of the eastern part of the country and started a separate front. Then little by little, they were getting territory and expanding. They expanded, amongst other places, near our Niquero nickel plant and they claimed they were "borrowing" machinery but they were really taking it and they were putting in little airfields over there and bringing in stuff clandestinely into Cuba. All that time, Batista and his regime just wrote it off.

Q: Well what was the attitude of our Embassy during this time and of you and the State Department?

LEONHARDY: Well, that's an interesting question because our Ambassador at the time, Gardener, was very friendly disposed to the Batista regime. The only time we really got any good political reporting out of Cuba was when he was away and Carlos Hall was in charge. We got a pretty good feel for what was going on, but Gardener would not sign anything going out of the Embassy that was at all adversely critical to the regime. So it wasn't that we didn't know what was going on, but we weren't getting it through the ordinary channels. It was almost amusing the way that Gardener and his DCM got along. He was always playing jokes on his DCM, making him mad. One story was (well, this is a true story) their offices adjoined in this huge, big building we had. It was a rectangular skyscraper on the shores of the ocean there and Gardener dressed up like a Cuban one time and he opened up the direct door to the DCM's office and made a little noise. And the head of administration happened to be talking to the DCM at the time and the DCM looked around and he saw this what he thought was a Cuban, you know, and he started shouting at him in Spanish to get the hell out of there. And Gardener pulled off his disguise and said, "I fooled you." That's the type of thing... Gardener by now didn't like the furniture in the big Residence so he brought down his own furniture from Palm Beach and he'd do crazy things like one time these roosters (there were pockets of poor people around in this residential area and they all had chickens) these roosters were waking him up in the morning and he sent the Marines out there one time to do these roosters in which is not what the Marines were supposed to be doing, of course. They came back and reported they couldn't find the roosters. But anyway, it was indicative of what was happening down there. As far as the Embassy was concerned, we had some very bright people - good people - in Political (well, all areas of the Embassy), but we had this...

Q: Was this just another restive Latin American country sort of, (as far as you're talking about the '50s back in the ARA Bureau in Washington). Was this of any real concern or was this just another one of these unstable countries, you know?

LEONHARDY: No, I think it was much more than that, because, you know, it's only ninety miles from us here and it was our big supplier of sugar and we had a lot of American tourists down there, a lot of investment, we had heavy investments, not only so much in the sugar industry but in all kinds of other things, hotels, you name it.

The other problem we had was up in the Department, we had the two heads of this area, a guy (you probably heard his name) named Bill Wheeland - a nice guy - and Alan Stewart, his deputy, were both really fine, able guys but they both previously had been press men and Wheeland was born in Cuba. He spoke Cuban Spanish just like a native but it was horrible Spanish. He was not on that job when I first came there but about maybe within a year he took over that job. He was very conscious of what Herbert Matthews, of the New York Times, who was an enemy of all dictators, but Herbert Matthews really was out to get Batista and his regime out there and he just went after him all the time in the New York Times. Wheeland, in particular, he'd come into my office sometimes and he'd say, "Herbert Matthews just called me. 'You can't do this, you can't do that'." And it was funny because another guy you probably ought to interview is a fellow named Ed Little who lives over here, (he was my immediate boss for quite a while and were together in Spain). But Ed Little and I were having lunch last year and both agreeing that the influence of the press, and in particular Herbert Matthews of the New York Times, on our policy in Cuba was just overwhelming. It's hard to believe, but it was true. Both of us felt that it was influencing our whole policy towards Cuba way beyond what it should have and in retrospect, it... Herbert Matthews went down there, went up in the mountains and had his picture taken with Castro. This was after the Batista regime said he doesn't exist anymore. And it came out front page of the New York Times. Then we had all these commitments under our Inter-American Defense Program, in which we send arms down there and then Herbert Matthews would get wind of it and say, "You can't do this." And Wheeland would come running and say, "We got to stop this," you know, "Stop that." Then we had another fellow who was his superior who was Deputy Assistant Secretary, a guy named Bill Snow, and he didn't agree with Wheeland so there was all kinds of vexing problems in the Department itself plus what we had down in the Embassy. But anyway, Castro also had a representative here in Washington, a guy named Betancourt who more recently was head of the Radio Marti down in Florida. But he was all for Castro and they had a big operation out of Venezuela and they'd get radio messages up here and everything else and he knew everything that was going on down there. He would come into my office every once in a while, complaining about something, you know, and sometimes I'd talk to him and sometimes I'd say, "Get out." Right after Castro took over, he went down and headed up one of the banks and then he got cross-wise of Fidel, like most of Castro's top followers and left. So he came back to the States. Another guy that was his first Minister of Finance, a guy named Lopez Firsquete (I used to see him down there), he'd been in the Prio Government, really a fine guy, good technician, and he wanted to take me up one time to see Castro in the mountains. He said, "I can get you up there if you'd like." So I said, "No." Anyway Firsquete was the guy that got a big job when Castro first came in and then he was thrown out, you know, they got cross-wise right away quick. But anyway, you had all these skirmishes in the islands and some of them were made up, I think, and the press was all... I was a twenty-four hour, around-the-clock deal, I was low man on the totem pole, I got all these calls. I finally got them to give me an assistant. I remember, one time I came out of the State Department and the sun was still up, it was summer and it was still up. That's the working hours you had.

Anyway, some interesting little sidelights. Prio came up for an interview with Wheeland one time. That was before we had any security of any type in the State Department. A day before he comes up, I'm in Wheeland's office - in the entry to his office and Wheeland isn't in and a guy come in there and he says, "Where's Mr. Wheeland's office?" He was an American. I said, "This is it." And he sort of looked around, looked in the door, and then he walked out. It wasn't until later that I found out that he was one of Prio's bodyguards. Anyway, right sort of in the middle of my stay in Cuban Affairs, Gardener was pulled out. He never could understand why, you know. But I guess his resignation was accepted when the President came in - when Eisenhower repeated as President. Anyway, he came out. I went to my boss and I said, "We've got to get the best career ambassador with Latin America hand that we've got and get him down there because this thing is getting hot." Well, there was a hiatus at the time where we had no Assistant Secretary; Rubottom was Acting and I have the utmost respect for him, a very fine fellow - but the other problem we had was John Foster Dulles did not care about anything about Latin America. You couldn't get anything through to him. We tried to get one of the Cuban Ministers, who was up here, who was in charge of Security and sort of up here under CIA auspices, to an interview with John Foster and it was turned down at first. And we had to go to Dulles' brother...

Q: Allen, the head of the CIA...

LEONHARDY: ...to get this guy in for an interview. Anyway, we started getting rumors about who was going to go down to succeed Gardener and then, one day, the Belgian Desk called me up and they said, "You can't get any luckier than you getting." He said, "You're getting the guy who was supposed to go to Belgium, is going to be your new Ambassador in Cuba." That was the first I heard. His name was Earl E. T. Smith, you probably heard of him, and his claim to fame was that he'd gotten control of the New York Central Railway, he and Jock Whitney, and he'd help engineer this, one; and two, he'd been heavyweight boxing champion at Yale when he was a sophomore. But anyway, another nice guy, he had a very young wife and little child. There was at least twenty years separation between the two. Anyway, Earl came in for his briefing and Wheeland says, "You've got to talk to Herbert Matthews." So he went up to New York, I guess, to see Herbert Matthews who told him what our policy ought to be, of course, and then he went down to Havana and Smith started turning around. He went down there with the idea we've got to get this guy Batista out of here, you know. But then he sort of... They say that his wife used to play bridge with some of these Cuban ladies who were pro-Batista, you know, and she'd come home and he'd be sound asleep and she'd write him a note and say, "You've got to get away from this liberal crowd and get over on Batista's side." So anyway, he tried to ride the middle-of-the-road, which was impossible, but I would say, in retrospect, that we had two Ambassadors down there, as much as I respected both of them as individuals, that shouldn't have been there. And that influenced our whole lack of policy, shall we say, because there really wasn't any. We did a lot of shimmying around on our policy down there. Nobody seemed to be getting excited about Fidel Castro until, I think, Smith started getting worried about him. But the Batista regime said, "Nothing to worry about." But then he kept capturing more territory, and so forth. And then Che Guevara got into the scene and joined up. So you had a real threat to the regime and nobody knew this guy. When the Cubans tried to prove that he was a communist and they said he participated in the 1949 Bogataso (which he did)...

Q: This is in Colombia when George Marshall was in a Foreign Minister's Meeting, the Inter-American Conference there?

LEONHARDY: And a very good friend of ours, who was in the Cuban Government, he was in the Embassy here for a while and then he took over the whole sugar operation here and then he left and Castro took over, he was with the Inter-American Bank. He told me one time, he was in the Cuban Embassy in Bogota when this happened and that Castro came in in his old smelly, leather jacket, he'd been traipsing around with a gun under his arm, and he bragged about the fact that he'd knocked off a few people including a couple of priests and nuns and this guy, I believed him because he was always honest with us.

But anyway, we'd prod the Cubans a little bit, saying, "You know, come up with the proof. You know, where's the proof that he's a communist?" And, of course, he was playing footsies with the communists at the University of Havana, which the university was autonomous, the police couldn't go in there, and so forth. They'd come out and raid and shoot up places - and then they'd go back in to the Recito as they'd call it and they couldn't touch them. And Castro was pretty well documented that he knocked off quite a few people as a student when he was there. And of course, he had been married into a wealthy family at one time on the east side of Cuba, coffee people, and had a son by this woman. But anyway, they never could come up with anything indicating, you know, that he had ever been a member of the communist party, and so forth. His brother had been over behind the Iron Curtain, we knew that. Then he would get people that were believable, who were opposed to Batista; one was a fellow named Felipe Pasos who after he was thrown out of Cuba by Castro, came up and worked in the Inter-American Development Bank. Felipe Passos was a brilliant young economist who'd been in the Prio regime and Felipe wrote, in effect authored, a declaration that Castro made from the mountains promising democracy and promising everything that we wanted, he was promising. You know, he got a lot of support from the Cubans you know, and a lot of support up here. We said, "Oh, he's a democrat, he wants to restore democracy, he's saying the right things" which he repudiated later on, of course, after he got in. But anyway, I left before Castro took over.

I wanted to get out of Washington and my father had been quite ill. In fact, he almost died when I was on that job. I had to fly clear out to Montana and back to North Dakota and they were just planning for his burial, really, and he motioned me over to the bed after I'd been out there for about two or three hours, and he mumbled something to me and I finally got it. He said, "Go down and get me a six-pack of beer." And that turned things around for him. But anyway, I wanted a post where I could take him and get decent medical service for him so I took a post down on the border at Nogales.

Q: Well, before we leave the Cuban Desk...

LEONHARDY: I have some other things to say.

Q: Yes, go ahead. I'm trying to capture the attitude; how about with the professional Foreign Service crew that you talked to and the officers coming out of Cuba, you know, who'd come back through. Now what were you getting?

LEONHARDY: Well, the last year of the Batista regime, we had pushed Batista into agreeing to elections and he put up a puppet candidate. There were several other candidates from the opposition including ex-President Grau. The Castro regime didn't want this election to take place even and they did everything they could to disrupt it - to discourage it. Some of the people running against the Batista candidate were pretty fine people and the one thing he didn't want was one of those people to win. Of course, the election was rigged and the Batista guy won the election. He never got to be President but he won the election. So we were trying to push this democratization program, you know, and getting back to... And we did a lot of work on pressuring this regime to have elections and try to make them honest and all that stuff. That was our one big hope and we figured if we could do that that would burst Castro's bubble which it didn't do, of course. In the Embassy itself, I think, all the people working in the political side were pushing that aspect and Wheeland was pushing hard but when I left...

One other aspect that I think I should bring to your attention is several things that occurred during this period is the Castro people were making incursions further and further west of their eastern mountains, and so forth. They were threatening, amongst other things, our Guantanamo Naval Base water supply. The supply came from about four kilometers outside the base from the Yantares River and the Cubans had guards there guarding the plant - a small group of their militia, their soldiers. As the Castro people started getting close, these guys decided to take off. You know, it had gotten too hot in the kitchen for them, they took off. And so the GSA people who ran Niquero - who were responsible for Niquero - they got hold of us and said, "We gotta' do something." So we sent a telegram down to... I met with Rubottom and I wrote up a telegram that in effect said to the Cubans, "Go to the Cuban government telling them that we're going to put Marines in there to guard that water station until they could get their soldiers back there." When Dick saw my telegram, he said, "Well, you know, this is too big for me." So we got an immediate audience with John Foster Dulles, which wasn't easy. We had the legal counselor of the Department came in for that. John Foster looked at the telegram, and he was doodling on what I call a John Foster Dulles pad, and I had to do the oral briefing. He looked at the telegram and he said, "Well, there's only one thing to do." And he signed it but he added a brief sentence at the end, "Not in uniform." Well, this was violating our sacred inter-American agreements, sending troops into any part of Cuba. Anyway, the Castro people got wind of it right away quick. They knew as soon as we put these people in, they knew it. They sent a message up to this guy Betancourt who came running in and says, "We'll guarantee the water to your base, just don't have Batista put this troops back in." That was one sort of shaky little incident we had. Then we had the other problem was with...

Q: By the way, to finish that off, we didn't send the troops in?

LEONHARDY: Yes, we did. We sent Marines in to guard the plant and then the rebels got wind of that, of course, right away and they got word down to Venezuela to get the message up here that they weren't going to touch it, you know. And we said, "Well, that's fine but we're going to insist on Batista putting people in there." And they said, "We won't bother them." So Batista put some people back in there.

Then we had a similar case over in Niquero. They were getting closer and closer, the mines were about twenty kilometers away and they freighted stuff - the mineral - into this plant and they had a lot of Americans housed. We had over a hundred Americans housed there with their families and schools and the whole business. The GSA guy, who happened to come from Nebraska, we hit it off pretty well because I'm from North Dakota and he's from Nebraska. But anyway, we had to have the usual evacuation plans for the Embassy for any American establishment and we had one for Niquero. The idea was the first escape route was to get them in boats, get them across the bay and over to an airfield in a sugar place called Preston and then we'd fly them out of there. The other was to have a ship come into the harbor and take them out - an American ship from Guantanamo wherever we could get it. The third alternative was to do an overland escape. Well, neither the first nor the third alternative were available because the airport had been taken over - it was threatened, and the roads were threatened so we had to get them out by sea. So we got hold of the Pentagon and they got hold of a ship - it happened to be a freighter and they had their radar out and they started coming in to this little harbor and they detected something in the radar and it turned out the rebels had put a chain across the entrance to the harbor with dynamite on it. They could set it off from the shore. So we had all these people down on the dock ready to be evacuated. So then we had to dicker with Betancourt up here and say, "Get the rebels to get their mines out of there; we've got get our people out." So we agreed and they were in there - armed - in the whole complex. We then took our people off the dock and put them in a concrete building and they were housed there until we could get them out. But anyway, they said, "Go to Batista and tell him not to send his people in here," because they had guards around there and they left. They were Cuban Marines. "Tell him not to send his people back here." So we did that until we could get our people out anyway. And they no more got the mines out of there and in come the Cuban Marines and they had a real shooting match. Our people were in this concrete building, of course. They were not subject to the line of fire but anyway, the Marines chased the rebels out and we got our people down to the dock and got them evacuated but it was a kind of a forty-eight hours of hairy moments, you know. Those were the two principal problems we had with incursions from the rebels. But anyway, before I left...

The other thing I wanted to mention was we were getting a lot of pressure from Congress. We had one Congressman from Oregon that was making a one-man effort to try to get us to change our policy - to get Batista out of there, and so forth, and to side, in effect, with the rebels and he just constantly wrote letters and got on, it wasn't TV in those days, but he was really public with it all the time. And then, of course, you had Herbert Matthews leaning on us very heavily and then there were others - those were just the two principal ones.

But anyway, I could see at least and I think most of our people could that this thing was getting to the point where Castro presented a real possibility of getting in and taking over, despite what the Cuban Government was telling us. But anyway, after I got out, I got down to my new post in Mexico and Bob Stevenson who you should interview, he's in Florida now but he'll be back in Virginia, I think, in another month or so. Herter took over the Department of State and one of the first things he was interested in was what in the hell is going on in Cuba. He asked that he get a written report on the history, really, of our relations with the Batista regime. And I no more got down to my post than I had to come back here. Before I left, I went in to see Dick Rubottom and he says, "What do you think is going to happen down here?" I said, "Well, if I were to pick up the paper tomorrow and see that Batista had fled the country, I wouldn't be surprised." Well, I was down on the border I couldn't get back, it was during tourist season. I had an awful time, there were only two airlines going into Tucson but I finally got back, but by the time I got back, Batista had fled the country and Castro had taken over. So everybody, all of his followers, real nice people, were helping him out. They were all "Oh, we're going to have a wonderful democratic regime, this is going to be great." Anyway, Bob Stevenson and I started writing this thing and we reviewed all the traffic. We had to have it done, they wanted it in two weeks, I think, which was a monumental job, you know. We worked on it, we got a rough draft, Bill Snow, who was the Deputy Assistant Secretary, was the one we had to report to on this; but Bill Wheeland used to come in once or twice a day saying, "How you coming? Slant it this way, slant it that way." He was going on the basis of who Castro was picking for his cabinet and, of course, he picked for his first President a guy who'd been his judge, had tried his case years ago in Santiago de Cuba. And, if we had to pick his cabinet, we couldn't have done much better, except for two or three people. The Minister of Education was a communist and two or three other pretty bad people in there but most of them were technicians, commerce and their Foreign Minister, etc., were all pretty attractive. Then we'd wait and see what Castro was saying, you know. We were working on this paper and we got the draft completed to the last chapter. I didn't write that because Bob was in charge, I wasn't here, I'd gone home on some leave and then gone down my posting on the border. Wheeland was running in and out, you know, but then finally, Earl E. T. Smith had gotten canned and he came up and he was going through his de-briefing. He came in and he read what Bob had written which Bob had developed because there was a lot of stuff going down through Roger channel that Bob wasn't aware of.

Q: Roger channel?

LEONHARDY: That is a CIA channel. And there was a lot of stuff that he wasn't aware of and Bob just had to write it from what the telegraphic traffic we had, you know, and so he said, "Well, I just have to write it the way I see it from here." Anyway, Earl E. T. Smith came over and looked at the last chapter and he says, "That isn't the way it happened at all," he says, "I knew Batista was leaving three days before he left." So we said, "Well, Mr. Ambassador, it wasn't in the telegraphic traffic." He says, "Well, I didn't think it was important at the time." Can you imagine? Anyway, I said, "How did you know, Mr. Ambassador?" Well, he'd brought his business secretary down from New York to be his secretary and she'd only been there about a month or two and she was trying to find a place to live - an apartment, you know - and the Foreign Minister called the Ambassador (a guy named Guell who had a party for me one time); he was looking for somebody to rent his apartment. And the Ambassador says, "Well, what do you want to rent your apartment for, are you leaving?" He says, "Well, I'm going over to the Dominican Republic for a little while. I thought it'd be nice to have somebody in there while we're gone." And he says, "I didn't think anything about it at the time." So he says, "Send your secretary over here and have her look things over." So she went over there and here was the Foreign Minister and his wife, furiously packing, foot lockers and anything they could throw stuff in. They were in the group that left with Batista, of course. And so she looked at it and he said, "How do you like it?" "Oh, it's nice, very nice." It was a big apartment. Anyway, she got back to the office and reported what she saw, which the Ambassador did not report to us, of course.

She thinks that the apartment is just a little too big for her, and so forth, and decided she didn't want it or something. So he said, "Well, you know, rent is no problem, you know..." Then the Ambassador described several other events where the top military people had come in to him and wanted to get...

Q: He didn't share this with his staff?

LEONHARDY: No.

Q: It reminds me of the story about the Chief of Protocol, a lady, who was saying, "Oh, yes, the Queen of England told me this a long time ago." Well, why didn't you say anything?" "Well, I wouldn't tell anybody else that." In other words, this was a confidence between two people. I mean just no conception of their role.

LEONHARDY: Well, it was pretty pathetic. Anyway, we finished this thing; we did a first draft in three weeks. We brought it in to Bill Snow and then we said we were going to need more time, you know, to... and smooth it out a bit. And that report that we worked on went up to Herter and then eventually went to the White House and Schlesinger - Arthur Schlesinger - we found out that he had it. He went back to teaching, you know, and Bob Stevenson wrote him about a year ago and said he'd like to get it and we each have a copy of it - that tremendous job we had to work on. But anyway, the Castro regime, of course, began turning around and going left - far left - after he sort of had his power consolidated and had his people in place and, of course, there were all kinds of books written about what went on after that. I can say, that the people in the Department and, I think, in the Embassy - political affairs - never really had any confidence in this guy. He was a megalomaniac; he was completely unpredictable. He now says - I just read a recent article last year in Time Magazine - he says, "Well, if the U.S. had treated me right, we'd still be friends." Anyway, it was a pretty difficult job.

Q: Did you get any repercussions from this? Because in a way, our policy with Cuba was a little bit reminiscent of our policy with China. You know, after it was all over, "Who lost China ?" was a big thing with McCarthy and there was a sort of minor replay of this of who lost Cuba. And I think Earl Smith was one of the principal people later on saying, "If it wasn't for those pinkos, I don't know whether the State Department..." I mean, did you get any of this?

LEONHARDY: I wrote a book called The Fourth Floor and when I got down in Mexico we had - Bob Hill was our Ambassador, Republican appointee, nice guy - but he told the guy, Supervising Consul General in Mexico City who came up to visit, he says, "You know, I don't think it's a good idea to have Terry Leonhardy on any job in Mexico because of his connection with this Cuban thing." So before I went down to Mexico, I got a letter from Earl Smith to Bob Hill giving me a good plug, and so forth, so I presented that letter, not directly to Hill, I sent it down to the Supervising Consul General. He gave it to Hill and Hill got the word back, "Tell Terry to forget all about it." I don't think anybody really had much faith in Castro but we've had faith in many of the people he appointed at first, so we thought this was going to be all right but then they gradually kept leaving or he was knocking them off and they were coming back to the States and then the regime just totally changed, of course. Che Guevara had a big influence, no question about it, on Castro's thinking, as did his brother Raoul. But anyway, I used to talk to Cubans afterwards - a lot of them I respected, you know, and they say, "It was our fault, not your fault. We were asleep."

Q: You're talking about the Cubans. They, themselves, were at fault, yes.

LEONHARDY: Yes. This guy hoodwinked us and we thought that he was going to be all right. A lot of people thought, we didn't think we was going to be all right, but a lot of people did and then look what happened.

Q: You were in Nogales from when to when?

LEONHARDY: I arrived there at the very end of, I think it was, December '58 and then I had to come back here for that stint and then I went back. I was there, all of '59, all of '60, '61, and then in '62, I was transferred down to Mexico City as Consul General. At that time we had twelve consulates in Mexico.

Q: In this basically '59 to '62, can you describe a bit about Nogales. What were the dynamics of the city, and what the consulate was doing, and sort of what you were doing?

LEONHARDY: Well, it was an interesting... It was mostly consular work, of course. We had some political things happening up there - elections and all that stuff you reported on. And I had two States in my consular district, Sonora and Sinaloa, and I made a real effort to become friendly with the governors and the top officials. I also worked with the Governor of Arizona. We got a thing going called the Arizona-Sonora Commission which would meet - because they had a lot of mutual problems - and they'd meet every year. Now it's called the Arizona-Mexico Commission but it's still operating. I got a nice, big plaque - one side in Spanish, one in English - from the respective governors. But anyway, a lot of the problems were purely citizen's protection problems, some of them were pretty difficult. I didn't get involved in issuing visas, but we had a pretty big visa operation there because we had no consulate anywhere west of Tijuana and east of El Paso or... I even had a CIA guy in my office who was there maybe just half of my tour of duty.

Q: What would he be interested in there?

LEONHARDY: Well, he used to cover that whole northwest territory and he had a plane and he... I still see the guy, he's retired in Tucson - nice guy. Anyway, we did the usual political reporting but, as I say, there wasn't... You had the, what they call the, "politics of the finger." The President would say, "You're the next governor" and that's the way it went; the governor would say, "You're the next mayor." But anyway, the main problem we had was protection and having good relations with the governors and the police, and so forth.

Another aspect, we had teenagers coming down there and getting married and lying about their age and all that stuff. I got - the governor at the time was Obregon, who was the son of the former president - and Obregon was very helpful to us in these things. I told him about this and right away he gets the local judge or whoever's doing these things and throws him out and we had very good cooperation. Then we started getting Americans in jail on drugs and in Mexico it's a non-bailable offense, just the use or possession. You could have three marijuana cigarettes and if they catch you with them, and you stay in jail. Once accused the consulate got seventy-two hours to keep them from throwing American lads in jail and you're not there most of the time. After they get in jail, they're in there for a long time. And they're probably a little ex-Boy Scout from Keokuk, Iowa, but, you know, he'd never done anything wrong in his life, and you ask him why he came down there and get marijuana, and he says, "Well, the quality is better." But we had a lot of incidents like that. And we had a big fort on the border - two of them - we had Davis Mountain Air Force Base in Tucson and then we had Fort Wachuca...

Q: Which is a communication training place.

LEONHARDY: Exactly. You know, the Mexicans had no idea what those people did so I started arranging for the commanders to invite top Mexican officials up - the Governor and all of his mayors in the area, and so forth. I think it helped.

Q: I'm sure it did because otherwise they'd see those as sort of a menacing fort when actually, like Wachuca was certainly just a place we trained people in the signal corps.

LEONHARDY: Well, I got the Governor up there one time. He was a real womanizer and he flew up, I remember, and after we got there, we had this demonstration of these electronic gadgets and all this stuff and then the Commanding Officer had a dinner party and there was a bottle of whiskey or two in every room and all this stuff. After the dinner, which was early, the Governor said to me, he says, "Let's go down to Naco which is the nearest place on the border where they had all these houses of prostitution. I'd been down there, in fact, I went in to the police office one time and the guy showed me pictures of all the registered prostitutes; there were a hundred and sixty-two, I think, and where they were born and all the particulars. Anyway, he said, "Let's go down to Naco," and I said, "Well, if you want to go to Naco, let's go." Then he said, "Well, I guess I can hold out until tomorrow." He says, "When I leave here, I'm not going back to the capital, Hermosillo, I'm going up to Tucson; I've got a date with a blonde."

Another area that we had commercial things with was all this winter vegetable area down in Sinaloa which was a big supplier of winter vegetables to the U.S. and it got bigger and bigger and bigger. I got to know most of those people down there and I made an effort, as I say, to get to know the local officials, and so forth, and any Americans that were old-time residents, I tried to curry up to them too. So when we got somebody in jail down there, lots of time you'd starve to death in these regional Mexican jails in these small towns, and so forth. They'd pick up Americans sometimes on the road that didn't have any visas or any documents at all, that were hitch-hiking, you know, and they'd sock them into jail. I'd had two guys at the place called Los Mochis down in Sinaloa one time and I heard they were in jail and I had a Mexican friend down there and he says, "I have an arrangement with the police here. Anytime they get an American in jail, I go over and feed them because they're going to starve to death or they'll die because the local people they get in jail, they've got family." Anyway, I remember, I went in to talk to these two guys who were in jail and I said, "Either one of you guys have a prison record?" And they started confessing right away - armed robbery or this or that - and they'd gotten out on parole out of the State of Michigan prison and had gotten down that far. So then you have to call the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) and they have to arrange for...

I think the worst incident we had when we were down there that could have caused a real problem was: we had these soldiers from Fort Wachuca that used to come down and go to what they called Canal Street which is where all the houses of prostitution and bars were. The city was broke and they used to almost live off of fines they imposed on Americans that would come out of that place. They wait for them down at the bottom of this canyon and then they'd grab them for drunken driving. If they couldn't come up with fifty dollar fine, they'd throw them in the tank and then they'd give them the wherewithal to get somebody to come down and give them the money and get them out. One night we had two black WACs and three white sergeants came down there for a night on the town and it was cold, it was in January or February, and they were up there and they got royally drunk and they came down to this little river and they grabbed them and they threw the guys in jail but they didn't throw the girls in. Well, the girls started getting cold, they were out in the car, and they kept rapping on the jail door and making a nuisance out of themselves so finally they put them in jail too. They put them up in a women's quarters which was not very well heated and they complained - the liquor started wearing off and they started complaining about the cold. So they have long-term federal prisoners in some of these jails that are in for a long time and they have all kinds of cooking facilities and heaters and the whole business, you know. So they introduced them into a cell with some of these prisoners and the inevitable happened, of course.

We'd make daily jail calls over there and the vice consul called over and they said, "Well, we got two women in here." So we said, "Put them on the phone." So they put them on the phone and this one girl said, "I've been raped." This could have caused the Pentagon to shake and everything else. Now the newspaper guy on the other side - the American side - Nogales Herald, was a good friend of mine, a guy named Ray Hanson Sisk, and Sisk never printed anything in his paper that made the border look bad. But he also was an AP (Associate Press) stringer so one of his reporters called me and says, "I hear there's some big news from over there." I said, "Get the old man on the phone." So we got Sisk on the phone and I told him, I said, "Ray, we're going to give it to you straight. Here's what happened." So he says, "Unless AP asks me for it, I'm just going to sit on it," which he did and it didn't get out. Then the Pentagon, of course, was calling for these people to be charged with rape and sentenced. They had a trial and anyway, under our consular agreement with Mexico we have a right to have an American vice consul present for a trial of any American. So we sent our boy over there and the female judge was sleeping with the public defender who was defending these guys and she would throw our vice consul out. She says, "The trial won't start until you get out." And he'd protest and she'd stop the proceedings and then I'd call down to Hermosillo and, I remember, I got hold of the attorney general and I told him what was happening and he says, "Hold on the phone. I'm going to call the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. She's under him. Tell him what's happening. You have a perfect right to have that man there." So anyway, she got orders to let our vice consul be in to the postponed trial and then she still exonerated these guys at the end of the trial so then they appealed it. Meanwhile the Pentagon, the Judge Advocate at Fort Wachuca was after me all the time, "When are we going to get this..." I remember, these girls had to come down right after this happened and identify these people. So they had two chairs on one side of this aisle in the jail and then a "hot seat" over here and they brought every prisoner that was in the jail had to sit on that "hot seat" and they had had to say was he one of them or not. And they identified the proper people but, I was over there when they were doing part of this, and they'd be in that "hot seat" and when they'd say "no," then they'd go "aah." But anyway, that was one of the big incidents.

And then of course, another thing we had a problem with is Americans dying down there. Say a couple comes down, they go to the... or the beach, or Mazatlan, and then you've got to have all these Mexican health certificates, and death certificates to get the body out and regulate possessions. So we had a funeral director on the Nogales, Arizona, side and he used to make out a death certificate that said, "Dead on arrival at the border." And what they'd do is they told them, "If your husband or somebody dies in the family when you're down here, don't let them die and don't stop, just keep going until you get to the border. And so they'd get to the border and then they'd report to Customs, and so forth, "My dead husband's in the back," you know, "We've got the dog." And then they'd take care of it from then on. But it was just one of the things that happened down there. Then, of course, we were having the beginning of the drug problem, of course. That was especially down in Sinaloa where most of these drugs came from.

Q: What was this called?

LEONHARDY: The State of Sinaloa which is where Mazatlan is, the capital is Culiacan. And they were raising a lot of that stuff down there, mostly poppies, you know, and marijuana. There was no cocaine or anything like that, but it was beginning to start coming across the border. And then, of course, you had the problem of visas, letting people in or not, and so forth, and screening out people which was always a problem. Then we had one other problem down there which is rather interesting. They had what they called the "gold bar hoax." They would pull this hoax about once every six months or so and they'd get some guy with a little money, meet him in a bar in Las Vegas or something, and say, "You know, there's all these gold bars down in Mexico in a cave not too far south of the border. And they were smuggled out of the settlements by the Indians many years ago when the Spaniards came in. And they hid them in these caves and we don't dare report it to the government because they'll take them away from us. But they're real gold, no problem with that and we're anxious to get rid of them for a price." You know and all that stuff, so they'd sucker some guy to come down there all bug-eyed, you know, the type that would be gambling in Las Vegas anyway. Then they'd get up to Customs with these gold bars and they'd turn out they were brass. One guy came in one time and he had an American passport but he'd been in Switzerland. He told me, he says, "They can't fool me because I'm going to have an assayer with me." So he goes down there and everything's going fine and the assayer tests the stuff and "Oh, it's all gold." They used to have one brick, I guess, that was gold or something. But anyway, every time they'd go down there with their money to pay off, there was a guy named Pico de Oro they called him, he had all gold teeth. He would hold them up and take the money away from them and they'd come back to the border and they'd be fleeced, you know. This guy had the same thing happen to him. "Oh," he said, "I can't get into Mexico because I told them I was going down on business and they wanted to give me a business visa. What can I do?" I said, "Well, go to the other border entrance and just tell them you're a tourist," which he did and the next thing I know he's back in her office and I said, "Bring some charges. The Mexican Government would like to prosecute these people but you've got to do something." They don't want to, they're embarrassed. But this happened I don't know how many times...

Q: Then in '62, was it, you moved down to Mexico City, and you became what, Consul General in charge of the entire consular operation which was a huge job.

LEONHARDY: I think we had nine states, even down in Chiapas, that were in our consular district at the time.

Q: You were there from when to when I always like to...?

LEONHARDY: Well, I was there from July '62 to '64 and Tom Mann was our ambassador most of that time. Then he was brought up here as Assistant Secretary of State and I was supposed to be going on home leave; the next thing I knew I was being transferred up to Washington as Director of Mexican Affairs.

Q: Well, let's talk about the time, you were Consul General. In the first place, what did this job of Consul General mean?

LEONHARDY: Well, I became Consul General a couple of months after I arrived. We had one of the biggest visa operations in the world. Then we had a big protection and welfare portfolios. We had an awful lot of Americans that came down there to visit, you know, and you had a lot of them that would expire when they were down there, of course, but then a lot of them would get in trouble. We had two or three officers that just did nothing but deal with authorities on getting these people out. Then we had... My job, as I saw it, was somewhat similar to what I started up on the border except I had to do it now in nine states. I did a lot of traveling and making friends with all the top officials, not only in the capitals of the state - governor on down - but also the principal cities. One of the things that I preached to these people, and it worked quite well, was, "If you get some young, punk American down here and you pick him up, and he's got some dope on him, he becomes a problem for you because you've got to feed him and put him in jail and you've got all kinds of static coming from his parents and etc., and I get it too. We're in the same boat. I get Congressmen writing me about this young kid that went down there and got in trouble, etc." I said, "The best thing to do is to turn these people over to Immigration and throw them out as undesirables." And they said, "Good idea." We had very few people. I did the same thing when I got to Guadalajara; there were very few people in jail that were... Now I'm not talking about people that are traffickers. Of course, if you get somebody who's, you know, dealing in the stuff, you know, give them the works. It worked pretty well.

Q: It's one of the trade secrets to consular work that essentially it's a matter of personal contact with officials, and making the case that both of you've got this problem and how do we get rid of it. The main way is get it the hell out of your district.

LEONHARDY: That's right. In both cases, I succeeded people that really hadn't done much of a job of getting around in the district and it really pays; your whole operation improves. When I was in Nogales, for instance, I go to the Chamber of Commerce people and I go to the Rotary Club and all these people and I said, "Now, when any of your members wants a visa, he doesn't have to come up and stand in line in the Embassy. Just send the passports up with a messenger, with a note, we'll stamp them and send them back. They liked that, of course. What we're trying to cull out are people that are trying to sneak in and stay. And these were businessmen, they all belong to the Chamber, they all belong to the establishment. We didn't want to hold them up, so that's what we did and it worked real well and it brought me a lot of good friends in Mexico. As I say, I got to know these people. And then we had this Arizona-Sonora Commission I was telling you about. They had two trips; they went to the World's Fair in Seattle and both governors said, "You've got to come." And I went to the World's Fair. Then after I left there and I was down in Mexico City, "We're all going to the World's Fair in New York and you've got to come," and so I went to that one.

Q: Let's talk a bit about the visa side of this. One always hears about the tremendous visa workload at least sort of post and the associated management problem of keeping usually young officers, often on their first tour, interested so you don't lose them to the Foreign Service. How did you deal with this problem?

LEONHARDY: Well, when I first went into the Foreign Service, as I told you, I was out issuing visas down here in Barranquilla, Colombia, and it was good training - language training - you don't always get the most educated level of the language, but I thought it was useful and most of these young officers realize - they want to get into Political or want to get into Economic - but they don't mind a stint for about a year on the visa operation.

We had a very able gal who lives here in the Washington area, Margaret Fagin and she was in charge of the visa operation in Mexico City. She's a very competent gal. One of the problems, of course, we always had was people trying to bribe people in the visa office - the underlings - to try to get around our security operation. We did find out that one of the locals one time was getting paid off by people who knew they couldn't get in... Our procedure at the time was to maintain a card file with notation. I think they attached a little green thing to the card if the applicant was ineligible or if there was something wrong, you know, and this local employee put in a different card and we had to finally... Margaret didn't like the idea but we did frame him and we caught him. So the visa problem was a big problem in the sense that...

But I think one of the most amusing stories involving visas was... well, we had in our new embassy in Mexico City... we had a big fountain in the main foyer and that's where the visa lines formed out in the street, on the Reforma, but by this fountain. This woman from out in the country somewhere was trying to get up the States. She had all her baggage of dirty clothes with her in a sack or something and she saw this fountain and she said, "Well, while I'm standing here, I might as well start washing clothes" which she did. But I remember, the head of USIA (U.S. Information Agency) there, Zack Bradford, a good friend of mine, said, "My God," he says, "I didn't hear about that until afterwards; we should have had pictures." But the other thing that I didn't mention, well, I'll get to it on Mexican Affairs, was on the Braceros Agreement and to the problems surrounding it.

Q: Was there much of a gap between the consular operation and the rest of the Embassy? I mean, did you find that the consular officers were kept off to one side or not?

LEONHARDY: No I didn't notice that. Tom Mann... I was always included in on the staff meetings and he treated me and that's why he brought me up, I think he respected me. We had a supervising consul general. Well, they elevated it to Counselor for Consular Affairs and he was the guy that brought me down to Mexico City and he covered the whole waterfront.

Q: Who was that, when you were there?

LEONHARDY: Leon Cowles. I remember once, for a number of days, he wasn't feeling too well, and he was going down to the coast - of course, we were in the altitude and that exaggerates whatever might be wrong with you, but he went down to the coast, he was going down to Veracruz, I think, or over in the Merida, I think it was. Anyway, he offered to drive me home that day in a chauffeured car and I took a look at him and I said, "Boy, you don't look good." I said, "I think you better get to a doctor." He said, "No, no..." So I called his wife before he got home and I told her, I said, "Leon doesn't look good to me. He's complaining of some breathing problems, and so forth, and chest pains. So she canceled the trip and got him to the doctor and he was having real problems so they eventually... he was examined and they said, "Well, you can take your trip to the coast, that might do you... But he went down there and he made an appointment to go up to one of our bases up in Texas to get a complete exam...

Q: The base was probably Brooks Field, or something like that.

LEONHARDY: Yes. By God, they discovered there, when he got over they put him in one of these simulated altitude chambers and when he got over three thousand feet he was in trouble. His blood tended to coagulate. So they wouldn't let him go back. So he operated for a while out of Monterrey but I had to do a lot of his visiting for him at different consular posts. Then we had a hiatus period there for a while where we had no consul general or counselor for consular affairs until a guy named Joe Henderson came in there. Anyway, as I said, I was out on the road a lot in this job because I felt that was the way to get things done.

Q: You know, later it became rather crucial that there were... as more and more of the sons of the well-to-do and all started ending up in jail - many of them trafficking, the Embassy and the State Department came under a lot of fire from the public and Congress arguing we weren't doing "enough," I'm putting quotations around "enough." I mean, was that a problem yet when you were there?

LEONHARDY: Oh, yes. Much more even so after I was up here for about four years. Guadalajara was even worse down there.

Q: Well let's talk about the time you were there in Mexico City.

LEONHARDY: Yes, it was the beginning. Another problem we had, which I should have mentioned, was these damn, phony divorces. We had a small state south of Mexico City called Taxcala. And there were some officials down there involved in this divorce racket and they were grinding out these divorce documents and the recipients would bring them up to us to be authenticated - the signatures to be authenticated. Well, that's all we're doing is saying " that's the guy's signature," but that was misconstrued. You put you seal on it and everything else and people up in the States say, "Well, it's got the seal of the Embassy on it, it must be okay." Well, we knew that, in most of these cases that they were phony and we had ways of finding out so we put a caveat on the end of it. "This does not mean this document is legal or anything. All we're authenticating is the signature." Well, some time later, I was up in the border in Tijuana. That was when we had a hiatus and I was visiting other consular offices outside of our district. I was up there with a vice consul who later became Ambassador to different countries and who died here about a year ago, Harry Bergold's his name and his wife was my secretary in Mexico City, Honduran extraction. Anyway, we were right on the border of Tijuana and there was this neon sign; it was at night. The neon sign was flashing, "Marriage-divorce, marriage-divorce, marriage-divorce." So I said, "Let's go in and see what we can find out here." So I pretended I was an irate husband that wanted to get rid of my wife. This guy ushered us into his office very nicely appointed, nice furniture, and so forth, well-dressed guy and I told him, I said, "Look, I've had my last fight. I want out of this thing." I said, "But I want, I understand I can get a divorce in Mexico but I said, "I want this thing to hold water. I don't want it ever to be challenged in the U.S. courts or anything." I just kept pressing that and the guy at first said, "Well, we can get you a divorce in Plascala." But where in the hell is Plascala? And he said, "Well, it's a state down in... It'd be a good, solid divorce." I think the fee was four hundred dollars, or something like that, you know. He had all these papers I was supposed to fill out and then I kept haranguing him about the fact that I didn't want any problems with this. I said, "I hear sometimes you have problems anI just don't want..." He says, "Maybe it's better if you get your divorce over in Chihuahua." He says, "That's going to cost you two hundred dollars more." But I couldn't get him to give me the papers to take home with me or back to the hotel, you know. He wouldn't give me anything. But at least I thought I'd see about what happened on the other end, you know. But we'd get these things by the basket full, you know, out of this Plascala, which is a little tiny provincial capital, so that was a problem for us. I can't think of anything else right now. I think of these things when I get home sometimes.

Q: Well, if anything comes to you... We'll stop at this point. If anything comes to you about time in Mexico. We've talked about the divorce problem, we've talked about the arrest cases. We might talk a little more about what would you do for the American prisoners who really did end up in jail. I mean that you couldn't get to move on.

LEONHARDY: Well, if we had American prisoners in jails around Mexico City, we'd get the American community involved and try to provide food and stuff for these people. I think they even had a visitor arrangement, and so forth. But if you were out in the hinterland somewhere, it wasn't quite that easy, but I'd try... as I did up on the coast... I'd try to get people in the locality that would be helpful to us.

I remember, there used to be, south of the border in the state of Sonora, you have to go through an Indian reservation, the Yaqui Indian Reservation, for about thirty miles, and there was an American religious guy down there and he was, I forget, fundamentalist, I think, but he was translating the bible into Yaqui and he lived in one of these little adobe huts just like the rest of the people, these Indians down there, and he had a telephone and that reservation is very much like I was born and raised between two reservations out in the West. It was important to stay friends with him because people on the Reservation would let their horses run all over the damn road and hills. We warned all tourists when I was on the West Coast, "Please don't drive at night." But they'd do it - got to get to Mazatlan at dawn and all that. Anyway, then they'd hit a horse or something. And under Mexican law, which is something very interesting - under Mexican law, if you have an accident on the road, and somebody, even though you're not injured, if somebody in your car is injured, they have a, not only a criminal liability law that says you're accused of injuring that person if you hit a road sign or something and somebody's injured, but also a civil liability law. People could get insurance at the border to cover their cars and their damage and all this stuff, but it doesn't cover the civil liability. Most people didn't understand this dual liability under Mexican law and they travel the midriff of Mexico, and they have this accident and the next thing they know they're in jail because of a civil charge against them. Well, what they used to do is the local Mexican court made the bond real high and then they'd let the tourists out. The tourists, of course, would say that all they want to do is get the hell out of Mexico, so they would leave the money. I would go to the Governor, for instance of Sonora, and I said, "Look, this is highway robbery." And I said, "These people... It's going to ruin your tourism and everything else." And they finally got these judges to assign smaller bond fees. That was another issue that we had problems with.

Q: Were the Yaqui Indians, would the missionary to the Yaqui Indians, would he be the man to telephone?

LEONHARDY: Yes, he would call us if anybody reported an accident in this thirty kilometer stretch which was a real danger zone - a very helpful guy. And then you'd get all kinds of little, tiny problems when you get Americans living in these far away places. There's a famous village or town in Sonora called Alamos which is an old silver mining town and they used to have a mint there and everything. They've got these beautiful, big, old houses. Some enterprising American went in there and developed this area; you can't change anything, the house got to stay the same but you put windows in it and you fix it all up and then you sell it to some American. So we had a town full of Americans there and, once in a while, they'd have some problem. I remember this one lady who was from Montana who I befriended. The neighbors were Mexicans and they claimed that her septic tank was contaminating their well. And I had to go to the Governor about that and he sent me over to his Minister of Health and what he did was, he said, "We'll work something out." And I got what I call a "Mexican Solution." He had this woman put down a little thing down in her septic tank which she had to stir a couple times a week and then he wrote the people who were complaining that, as far as he was concerned, this resolved the matter. But you had a lot of little things like that.

Down in Vallarta, which we'll get to later when I was in Guadalajara, we had a movie actor. He was a bit of an actor, but well-known in the movie crowd, a guy named Phil Ober. He used to be very helpful to us and later, I pushed before I left to get him to be made consular agent, which they did. Anyway, he lived right, flat next door to Liz Taylor and Richard Burton. They were never there when I was there but he had access to her swimming pool so I used to go over there and swim and he took us through her house one time and he says, "There's one room I can't take you into, that's the bedroom."

Q: Well then, did you get involved, I mean, a good number of movies were made in Mexico - American movies - did that cause any consular problems?

LEONHARDY: No. The Night of the Iguana was filmed down in Vallarta, there was never any problems; and I can tell you about another - when I get on Guadalajara - I can tell you a few incidents over in that area. No, the film thing... There's one story that came out about Liz Taylor and Burton. He had to go off very early every morning, before the sun got up, out to an island or something there where they did a lot of filming. They say that Elizabeth used to get up a couple hours later and go out on the balcony and she'd stretch her arms out like this and looking at the sun coming up and say, "I feel like a new man today." The one true story that Phil Ober told me one time was that there was a little, tiny bridge that goes from one part of her property across the street to another part. She was sunning herself out there on this bridge; it had an old-fashioned wall up on the side and some tourists came along and they were pointing at her residence, you know, "This belongs to Liz Taylor." Then they started telling a bunch of superfluous - not only superfluous, just made-up stuff about her. She jumped up and shouted, "That's not true."

Q: Well, we'll pick this up, but first could you tell me a little about Thomas Mann, because Thomas Mann was a major figure in Mexican policy. Could you tell me a little about how you observed him when he was Ambassador to Mexico?

LEONHARDY: I had a lot of respect for him, a lot of respect, and I think it was mutual. Because of the respect, that's why I got pulled up to Washington but I think he ran a very good shop and he knew how to use his personnel very well. He'd get invitations, for instance, from the Governor of Texas, one time they were going to have a meeting of people from the border area and the Texans up in Austin, and he liked to have an Embassy representative. He pushed the button and I'd go. So there was a lot of that. Then we had a terrible, terrible case which I should have gotten into, I guess, when I was in Monterey. It was called the Dyke Simmons case. We got into it sort of on the periphery, we weren't in the middle of it. It was about a family that was murdered on the road from Laredo down to Monterrey. This guy was down in Mexico and the local authorities picked him up and charged him with the crime.

Q: You say, the guy - another American?

LEONHARDY: Another American, Dyke Simmons, they threw him in jail and accused him of murder and all these different organizations in the States, these do-gooder operations got into the act eventually. It was in the Saturday Evening Post and it was written up, "This poor innocent man was being charged with murder and he couldn't have been there." But a lot of the circumstantial evidence did indicate that he was involved. Mann didn't send me up, but he sent one of his political officers up to the border to investigate behind the Mexicans to see what he could find out, come back with some kind of a flavor for this thing. Amnesty International got involved. Anyway, the evidence was pretty strong but maybe it was sort of like O.J. Simpson case, you know, you didn't know conclusively. Anyway no trial by jury, of course, or anything. Simmons eventually, with a lot of pressure from the States and all these organizations get off. The Mexican authorities finally decided, I think, that it was better having him back in the States than having him down there generating all this flack. So they let him go and the guy got to California and got in all kinds of trouble. What I remember are the volumes of files we had on the Simmons case. I remember, they pulled the file; we'd think the file was closed and they'd pulled it into Tom Mann's office, I think, when he got back. He followed it when he got up here. They came in with a dolly and all these files - the Simmons case.

Q: Okay. Well, the next time then we'll pick this up when you went back to work on Mexican Affairs. You were there from when to when?

LEONHARDY: I was there from October 1964 to the end of 1967.

Q: Okay, good. We'll pick it up then.

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This is the fourteenth of March, 1996. Terry, you said you wanted to add something else prior to getting off to Mexican Affairs.

LEONHARDY: What I'd like to do, I keep thinking of all these things, and I've never listed them all down, but what I'd like to do is after I get through with the regular interview, and maybe not today, but I'd like to list all these things down and come down and just in an hour maybe we could get it all done.

Q: Very good. Sure that would be fine. All right, well then, so we're starting with 1964 to '67, you have Mexican Affairs which is always been probably our most contentious relationship - always. What was the situation as you saw it when you came back? What were the things that seemed most pressing, difficult, urgent, what have you, regarding American-Mexican relations, that you would be concerned with?

LEONHARDY: From the Washington prospective, a lot of our problem areas with Mexico concerned trade problems and we had a number of problems in the border area. We had this salinity problem on the lower Colorado River, and then, of course, we were beginning to have the drug problem, and then, of course, we had another thing was the vexing problem were all the Americans that were in jail down there on drugs and that was connected with the drug problem.

We had this age-old border problem where we - this famous Shamisowl problem. They had an agreement back in about 1912 with three negotiators created this commission to study this change in the border on the Rio Grande around El Paso because the river, over a number of years, had changed its course and the Mexicans claimed that their border should be in such-and-such a place, we claimed it further south into what they thought was Mexico, and that happened to be about where part of downtown El Paso was, and the immediate area there. And it was "Shamisowl" in Indian Spanish, I think, means thorn patch and it was a thorn in our side and the Mexicans were constantly bringing this up and wanting to get it settled. Well, what happened, going back to, I think it was, 1912 when this commission voted two to one to change the border in favor of Mexico and we did not accept that and that was what really was the crux of the whole thing because we had agreed that we were going to do that and did not. So finally, under the Johnson Administration and maybe previous, I'm not sure, we decided to cede to Mexico around four hundred acres of land in the urban area - this wasn't skyscraper buildings or anything but it included, I think, about two hundred houses, it included a University of Texas cotton field and a cotton gin, and included a high school football field. So, when I first got up to Mexican Affairs, one of the first things that came up was Johnson was going down to the border to meet the Mexican President to symbolize the agreement that we made to cede them this acreage and they it all set up so that both Presidents talked and they were really on the new border when this happened on the high school football field, I think it was. And Johnson, I must say, had a love affair with Mexico...

Q: Yes, I mean, from Texas and all that.

LEONHARDY: And he had taught Mexican kids in school as a young man and it wasn't until years later that I learned that he even had an interest in a ranch down there but anytime that there was some kind of a pretext to do something with Mexico, why he was ready to go. These visits, if you've ever been involved in Presidential visits, their preparation takes an awful lot of work. You have the two elements of the Presidential group that you have to deal with. One is the public relations types and they want all sort of public exposures. They had a guy named Marty Underwood that I had to deal with over the years. The second type was the Secret Service that wanted to put him in a cage and not let him out. And so you have that constant battle going on with the Foreign Service in the middle.

Shortly after I got on the job, a presidential visit to El Paso was scheduled. It was then I learned a lot of things about Johnson. They didn't allow any photographs to be taken from his left side, I think it was. It was either right or left, anyway. He insisted on that. Then I'd been dealing with a lot of these problems when I had been stationed down there, of course, so a lot of them were nothing new to me except the elements kept changing a bit. In the Mexican Affairs office, I had a political officer and an economic-commercial officer.

We had also in our office in Mexico, they had a civil servant who was a representative of the boundary and water commission. He was quite famous because he'd been there for years and he'd stayed on that job and he knew all the border problems that the boundary and water commission had to deal with like the back of his hand and he didn't have any first name. His name was T.R. Martin. But anyway, I would get involved in those things once in a while, we'd have to go up on the Hill and testify with respect to some of the boundary and water commission matters.

One of the most vexing problems was the salinity... Mexico, under agreement, was allowed 1.4 million acre feet of water out of the lower Colorado River. They had an intake right just near the border, near Yuma there, for their irrigation which they have a big irrigated area around Mexicali which is right up against the border. The Mexicans were claiming, and with a degree of right, that we were putting contaminants in the water which increased the salinity of the water.

Q: This was because of our agricultural process which - not because of malevolence or something like that?

LEONHARDY: No, no. The problem area on the U.S. side was the Wellton-Mohawk irrigation project near Yuma which was around twenty thousand acres, I guess, and they were pumping water. They would irrigate and then they'd pump this water out or let it go out into the river and after the irrigation process it would collect a certain amount of salts in the soil and carry those into the river. I believe the figure was something like fourteen hundred parts per million, if it got over that then you had problems with using the water. The Mexicans were not the best as far as their irrigation practices. They could have used water with higher salt content if they had proper drainage and all that, which they did not have. But anyway, their crops (they grew a lot of wheat around there), their crops started turning brown and that was a big area of complaint from the Mexicans and they said, "You've got to do something about it." We were afraid, I should say, that they were going to take us to the World Court because the treaty did not define water quality. It just said 1.4 million acre feet of water. But we were afraid that if they ever took us to the World Court then it would define the water quality and so we did everything we could to accommodate the Mexicans without changing our Wellton-Mohawk drainage. So what we did was we built a channel where the water could be diverted around the Mexican intake so that in times when the water was high and they didn't have a problem, they could say, "Put it through our intake." And when it wasn't, we'd flush it down the other channel. That was not a highly costly venture but it costs money to do that and it still didn't do the job and every time we had these inter-parliamentary commissions, as you probably are familiar with.

Q: Between Mexico and the United States.

LEONHARDY: They had just begun then and every time Mike Mansfield, of course he was sort of a saint as far as Mexico's concerned, would go down there, they'd hit him up with this. They'd meet down there one year and up here the next. When I left the job it was still not resolved. It finally got resolved some years later when we made a special ambassador out of a former attorney-general, and sent him down to Mexico to negotiate on this and we finally ended up putting a de-salting plant, very costly operation, down near Yuma, on the river, to take this water in and clean it up before the Mexicans took it in. That was one of our major problems, of course. We had many others but that was a vexing one. On trade matters, of course, Mexico was not a member of GATT so they were always putting up barriers on our imports into the country in the middle of the night. So we were constantly having to negotiate with them or talk to them about these nasty things they were doing on the trade. It was still a very difficult country to trade with because not only did we have the import duties, but they put quotas and everything else on all kinds of non-tariff barriers to trade. Now, of course, they're in NAFTA and that doesn't exist anymore but...

Q: Who was the President of Mexico during this time?

LEONHARDY: The President, when I first got on the desk, was Lopez Mateos. They used to call him Lopez Potseos because he was always traveling worldwide. The Mexicans have a lot of funny stories about their President. He was succeeded by Diaz Ordaz and Diaz Ordaz had been in the cabinet and that was usually where their presidents come from. He was Minister of what they call Gobernacion, we call it Minister of Interior but it's really not a direct translation. They are in charge of all the national police and all of the electoral process, and so forth. He (I might get into this now because I didn't get into it in Sonora) started the first experiment, democratic experiment, in Mexico in 1961 when I was in Nogales. He decided that they should have a democratic process in deciding who was going to be the gubernatorial candidate in the state of Sonora. He figured Sonora was close enough to the U.S. and they thought they might be able to do it there when they couldn't do it in other states in the country. They had three candidates for governor, one was an army general who was stationed over in Chihuahua, and another one was a sub-cabinet minister in Mexico City, and the other one was the rector of the state university. That was a major political thing while I was in Nogales because they had headquarters in every city - each one of these candidates - and they were revving it up, you know. It was almost like what we're going through now in the primaries. But then they started getting nasty. They started burning down each other's headquarters and doing nasty things. The major newspaper in the State was coming out and saying, "Two of these guys aren't eligible under Sonoran law." The general hadn't lived in Sonora for, I don't know, how many years; the same with the guy in Mexico City. Finally, everybody was waiting for the signal from Mexico City, which one of these guys did the President really want, you know. They looked for all kinds of signals. They never came through because usually when you come out with a full page ad from the labor unions saying we support this guy, that means that Mexico City wants him. They tried to guess. Someone would follow this guy, saying, "He must be the guy." Well, they got so nasty that they finally decided, "We got to get out of this some way." So they hit on this idea of the fact that they didn't fulfill the residency requirements. So that took two of them out and left it to the rector of the university, who would probably not have made it otherwise. But anyway, I went down to Hermosillo a couple of days ahead of time, before the big PRI convention where they were going to go through the election. The wheels were all greased but nevertheless they had to go through this process. And they had it in a big theater right across from one of the main downtown squares. I took a young vice consul with me that had never been in the interior of Mexico before and I sort of broke him in. We got down there and I talked to Paul Kennedy the New York Times correspondent in Mexico City a couple of days before, and he asked me if I thought there would be any fireworks and I said, "There probably could be." Because what happened was that the general Topete didn't bow out. The guy from Mexico City did but this guy... So he had all of these Yaqui Indians behind him plus a lot of leftists and they weren't going to be denied. So they came into Hermosillo and they had roadblocks. When I drove down from the north, I had to go through two police roadblocks and from the south there were even more because that's mainly where the general's supporters were. But they got in somehow. They got in on railroad cars, or something, and they got up there and when I got down there I got hold of Kennedy and he said, "Boy, you ought to see what's happening downtown." That was the night before the convention. I went down to the square that night with the vice consul and all these people - the supporters of the general - have their tents pitched and were camped out there and were going to cause problems.

So the next day when we went down there, they had every policeman, I think, in the State of Sonora, lined up - no army but police people - with gas masks and tear gas canisters, and rifles, of course, ready for anything. I went down there with this vice consul a couple of hours before the convention started just to see what was going on and there was all kinds of maneuvering on the opposition people. They were gathering rocks and sticks and everything you could imagine - there were no armaments but... Anyway, the convention started and the guy who is going to be governor, the rector of the university and the head of the PRI from Mexico City that was sent up to observe this process - or the representative of the PRI - drove up in this big limousine and they got out. Just then, these people let loose over in this square and they started throwing rocks and big sticks and everything they could get their hands on. So then the police started firing tear gas at them and the wind was blowing our direction and the vice consul and I got caught in that stuff. I'd never been through it before but anyway we ran back about four or five blocks and got into a restaurant and washed our eyes out, and so forth. But I was worried because the consulate car was on the other side of this square so we went back there and there were two or three cars on fire and the military had come in then and drove these people out. The General was in a house about two blocks away which was easily visible from this hall because it had been an old railroad area and they'd cleaned it out and his followers were all out there, you know, they'd gathered. But my car was over near a restaurant where all these people were going to eat at after they got out of the hall and I was standing there and some Sonoran that knew me - I didn't know him - he came up and he says, "What are you doing here?" And I said, "Well, I want to get to my car." In all this mass of fires and stuff and he said, "You're trying to create an international incident?" He says, "I'll get you in my car and we'll drive around," which we did and I picked up my car and I drove out to the motel on the edge of town and while I was out there I was told that the police were going to raid this house where Topete was, and I drove down there with the vice consul and the police came in there and we were right behind them and they were using mustard gas or some pretty tough stuff, you know. They almost killed the General and his son and the people in there. So I said to the vice consul, I said, "How would you like to go down to the beach and get away from this?" So we went down there and got out of the place. But anyway, that was the first democratic experiment in Mexico.

Q: How did we view, I mean, we're talking about the time you were on the desk, the two presidents in Mexico? I mean as regards their attitude toward the United States?

LEONHARDY: Well, I think they were generally fairly disposed. Politically we had differences even Cuba. When I was down in the Embassy, and subsequently... One of the few outlets for people in Cuba to get out of Cuba was to go to Mexico and then come up to the States, you know, and they had to sit down there and wait for visas and stuff, but we had differences on that. Of course, Rusk was very friendly disposed toward the Ambassador. When I first came up here, their Ambassador was a fellow named Clio Flores. From here he went down as Foreign Minister within the first year I was here and he and Rusk were mutually admiring each other. When they dedicated the new Foreign Office down there which was in about 1966, I guess, Rusk was invited down and we went down on an official plane, of course, to Mexico City. Clio Flores pretty well understood the U.S. and how we felt about things because he had been ambassador up here for a number of years and sometimes, when we needed to get something done, why we could get it done through him, he was always quite understanding. He didn't get into trade stuff but we had a lot of other issues. For instance, we had a very high level officer in Pemex, the big petroleum monopoly, had fled to the U.S. a couple of years before I got on the desk and he was somehow a very close friend of the Senator from Oregon, Wayne Morse. How this developed, I don't know. Oh, I know one reason, Morse was a close friend of the head of Pemex at the time and there was a lot of scandal in Pemex - still is, I think - and this guy had been the ex-mayor of Juarez across from El Paso. The Mexicans were constantly pushing us to extradite this man back to Mexico because they were trying to claim that he was the culprit behind a lot of fraud. Whether he was or not, we'll never know. But anyway, if you know the extradition proceedings, the Secretary of State has to come out and say there is a good reason to believe that he'll be treated fairly if he goes back and all that stuff. There were indications that he would not be but anyway, I'll never forget, it was on a holiday, a federal holiday, I can't remember which one, it could have been Washington's Birthday or something, when Wayne Morse called up Rusk a day or so before and said he wanted to see him, so Rusk came into the office on the holiday so I had to be there to meet Morse and take him up to the Secretary's Office. Morse's plea was that this guy would not get a fair shake and he was innocent and all that stuff. So Rusk told him, he said, "Well, I have to make that judgment. But," he says, "I'll, you know, consider everything you're saying, etc." Then, the ForeigMinistry kept pushing us on this - not the Foreign Minister himself - but saying, "We want this guy extradited." So our Ambassador at the time down there was Tony Freeman and we told Tony about Wayne Morse coming in and the Secretary's feeling, and here was the head of Pemex telling Morse not to get this guy back and the Foreign Ministry was saying, "We want him." So Tony Freeman went in to the Foreign Minister and said, "Which of these do you want us to adhere to, your request to bring him back or the request from Pemex not to bring him back?" Clio Flores's response was, "You use your best judgment."

Q: Which meant don't bring him back.

LEONHARDY: "We'll understand." I think that was an interesting indication of the relationship we had with Clio Flores, he was very, very helpful and understanding. We had problems at the time with denying visas to some people down there that the Mexicans - I'm trying to think of the name of the famous writer, I'll think of it later, but he's on TV here a lot now - Carlos Fuentes, we denied him a visa, and I remember I was in Mexico City when that happened. The letter that I helped to draft to him, which he demanded, was published later in the Atlantic Monthly. But we did have a few problems there.

Q: Yes, it was because he was a supporter of the left, wasn't it; he had been in the communist party or something like that.

LEONHARDY: Yes, well, I think, you know you had this clause in the immigration law, I forget what it was, article thirteen, or something, which says that anybody whose entry into the U.S. would be inimical to the best interests of the U.S. could be denied entry. He would go up and make - he was scheduled to go to universities and make speeches which were not the type of speech which we felt was good for our country. So on that basis, we would deny him a visa. Of course, he was a pretty renowned writer, you know, with a lot of friends in the U.S. so that made it a bit difficult for us. I'm trying to think of other problems we had down there. But, as you know, it's the longest border in the world separating two countries with completely different ways of living, language differences, and cultural difference and so out of that arises a lot of these terrible problems we have.

Oh, the other one I wanted to mention which was highlighted during my service here in Mexican Affairs was the end of the famous bracero movement. Under that agreement which we had with Mexico which worked just beautifully, during World War II, we brought up as many as a half a million Mexicans to work in the fields, mostly field workers but a lot of others too. I remember, Barry Goldwater got - it was under Johnson and Willard Wirtz who was Secretary of Labor - they tried to do away with this and were successful and they were being pushed by Chavez out in California and his workers...

Q: Cesar Chavez, a union leader in the agricultural workers union.

LEONHARDY: Exactly. So under the agreement, the Mexicans had people up here, official people, who went through the areas where these people were housed, inspected, and so forth, and worked with our people in doing it, and these braceros were very well treated, compared to how they were treated in their own country. Most of them come from way down in the interior of Mexico and every year, towards the end, we were bringing up maybe around a hundred thousand, more or less. But every year, they start out in front of one of the ministries in Mexico City, there's a big square there and they park there and, I figure the average bracero paid in bribes about a thousand dollars equivalent to get his papers done. Then he has to go up to a center up in Sonora in a place called Empalme near Guaymas where all of these... They all looked alike, I've been down there in the midst of this thing and they look like a herd of cattle in a way because they all have a straw hat on, they always have jeans and you can't tell one from another. They'd charge them about a dollar a night to hang their hammocks under a roof or something down there while they waited and there was the first big place where they had to go through all the process of getting in to the U.S. We had Department of Immigration people, I think, or Labor people down there - our own people - who worked with the Mexicans in processing these people. Then once they were processed there, they came up to the border and there were two places that they could go through, one was in California, El Centro, I think, and the other one was in Nogales, they had a big reception plant. Then they had to take health exams, chest x-rays - if they found any spots on their lung or something, back you go. I've been in that place when these poor guys were just one step from heaven but had been told they had to go back. The system is just agonizing for these poor people. Well, anyway, they decided to knock this in the head, so under our regulations in this country, we had no minimum wage for agricultural workers. Willard Wirtz knew that but he said, instead of establishing a minimum wage, he says, "If you offer such-and-such a wage, and you can't get U.S. workers, then we will consider authorizing you to bring in foreigners." Well, what happened was that I had to go up and testify right after Willard Wirtz before the Senate Agriculture Committee which is headed up by Senator Ellender from Louisiana. The AFL-CIO was represented and the Arizona-California growers were the two big principals in this thing, each arguing their side of the... And Willard Wirtz got up and they said, "Aren't you setting a minimum wage?" He said, "No, they can pay any wage they want. But it they can't get workers and pay this wage, then they would be eligible to bring in foreign workers." Well, anyway, then our Department of Labor went out and started recruiting people through their employment offices, and so forth, and they were sending them West, recruiting them off the streets in Alabama and New York and sending them out there. And, of course, they were not field workers, they were not used to working on their knees in the hot sun picking crops, and so forth. But anyway, I was dealing with people in the Department of Labor on this thing and every time there would be somebody different.

But anyway, Ellender, I think, at the end of one session, the second session, said, (he had an accent from New Orleans which was something like a Brooklyn accent, you know and he said "woid" and "boid"), and he says, "I been sittin' here now two days, and it's the poipose of this committee to find out what's goin' on." He says, "I think, all I can say is somebody's lyin' somewhere and it's the poipose of this committee to find out." But anyway, they finally went through and the Mexicans couldn't believe it. The Mexican Government couldn't believe it and above all, the Mexican braceros who'd been coming up every year. Goldwater got up on the floor of the Senate and said that braceros were the best friends we got in Mexico. I was standing on a street corner in Mexico City one time - or sitting on a street corner getting my shoes shines when I was a consular officer coming down from Nogales and it was when we were having brinkmanship over in Germany on the Berlin Crisis. There was a big headline in the Mexican paper, you know, that war was imminent and I had three different ex-braceros come up to me on the street and asked me if I was American, I said, "Yes." They said, "You know, if you get in trouble, I was a bracero up there and I like your country and I'll fight for you." I remember that same night I got in a taxi and he was an ex-bracero but he says, "I used to work up in the State of Washington in the summer," he says, "They treated me so well." he says, "I got a good wage." But every one of these braceros, we figure, supported at least ten people in Mexico. I used to watch them cross the border when they were through for the season and they'd have a sewing machine under their arms or a small radio or a TV or something and everything else they were bringing they'd send back to their family.

Well, anyway, I think it was about this time of year, March, Tom Mann had been elevated to DeputUndersecretary of State, and Willard Wirtz called him and said, "You know, we may need some Mexicans for the strawberry harvest (or some other harvest) in California." And he said, "I want to talk to you about it." He says, "I don't handle that," he says, "You call Terry Leonhardy." So Willard Wirtz called me, here a cabinet minister, and he asked me if I could come over and see him the following week, with the Mexican Ambassador.

So we went over to see him and the Mexican Ambassador said, "What does he want?" The Mexican Ambassador at that time was a fellow named Hugo Marguide, a very nice guy. He said, "I don't know, it looks like he might need some people or something." He said, "Oh God, but we shut it off." and he said, "We can't turn it on again." I said, "Well, let's go see what he has to say." So we went over to see Willard and he said (he was an ex-professor of rhetoric, I think) and he could maneuver around in the language pretty well and he says, "Well, we're going to need some people for our strawberry harvest and for this and that and several tomato harvests." The Ambassador said, "Well, we want to be helpful," he says, "But if we turn on the spigot, you know, it's going to cause all kinds of problems because," he said, "Down in Mexico City, there are all these ex-braceros gathered to start getting their documentation together to come up to the States," and he said, "We had to go out there with tear gas, they just kept squatting. We had to get them out of there." One of the Mexican stories was that after they got them out of there, on the wall they had written, "Yankee go home and take me with you!" So the Ambassador says, "I have to know how many you're talking about." And he says, "Well, I can't give you a figure." He said, "Well, I have to have something." He says, "Well, you could tell your Government that you talked to me and you drew a conclusion that I was talking in terms of thirty thousand." Well, I had to work that with the Arizona-California growers. We worked up an agreement with the Mexicans which was quite similar to the bracero agreement which had to satisfy them. And then we still had Chavez and his group that didn't want these people in. So they got out the story that every Mexican that came across had venereal disease or had tuberculosis or something. And the Public Health didn't want to get back into the act. They'd done all the examining on the border before and they didn't want to get back in. So finally, they were pressured into getting back; so they went down there and the Mexicans recruited right near the border. They didn't want to go into the midriff of the county and cause all kinds of disturbances.

They got the necessary number, twenty-five-thirty thousand, I think, but we were in this negotiation. The negotiation on this agreement was between the growers and the Mexican Government. We weren't involved except we were trying to referee. I remember, I was at a dinner party this one night when the thing started coming unhitched over some clauses and I had to call the Ambassador to say, "If you'll give on this, these guys will give on this." I was the conciliator. Finally, we got the agreement and, I remember, they started coming across the border and Public Health was down there to take x-rays of them, lung x-rays and some other tests, and then they'd hang these up on a clothes line in the desert and off these guys would go to wherever they were going to work. Then the wind, I remember, came along and carried all these x-rays miles away because they didn't have their heart in it. They didn't want to be doing it and they went through just to satisfy the AFL-CIO. That was one of the big, big problems and, of course, they no more stopped this agreement the next year than they were coming up "wet." Nobody was asking any questions.

Q: You're talking about people coming up illegally across the border?

LEONHARDY: Exactly.

Q: Which has continued to this day.

LEONHARDY: Oh, yes. That was always some of our big problems with Mexico was all the illegal immigration. They weren't in a position really much to cooperate anyway but these people just... Of course, it was good for Mexico for them to come up here because we were providing them with work and foreign exchange. So that's been a perennial problem all the time to this day, of course. So the illegal immigration was a big one. The drug thing was just sort of getting going down there and we were putting pressure on the Mexicans to try to do something (which we're still trying to do).

But the other thing that was so endemic in Mexico was, and still is, the graft and corruption in government. One of the incidents when I was on Mexican Affairs involved this and we... The Mexicans decided about, oh, in November, that they were going to start enforcing their own customs laws on the border and no more moneda to pay off to get stuff in, or anything. So they decided they didn't have enough people trained to do it so they decided to start in the Laredo area between Laredo and Monterrey on the east side. So they put all their customs people up there and they had these stops - there were two of them - before you get to Monterrey. You've got to go through and theoretically, that's where they did the payoffs, you know, the bribes. Well, about Christmas time, two or three weeks before Christmas, these wealthy Mexicans from Monterrey who all had charge accounts in Laredo, Texas, stores would come up there with their kids and their big station wagons and start loading up with goods. And they'd get down to the first customs stop and they try to pay off and it didn't work and they say, "What have you got on board?" and they say, "Well, we've got all this." They say, "Well, we'll have to go through everything and assess duties on it, you know." "WHAT!!" So they would turn around and go back to Laredo and dump all the stuff back on the store. They all had these charge accounts and saying, "Give me credit." Well, the Congressman from that area, from Laredo, his brother was the lawyer for the department stores and this Congressman called us up and just started raising hell about what the Mexicans were doing by not letting these things in the country. I said, "Well, what can we do? We've been pushing them for years to stop all this bribery and corruption and now when they try to do it, we can't go to them and tell them not to." I said, "The best thing for you to do if you want to talk to somebody about it, don't talk to us, talk to the Mexican Ambassador." But anyway, it was indicative of how I ran into areas of corruption during my stay in Guadalajara and other areas and it was endemic in the system. I remember we had an American who was trying to get in some kind of seed into Mexico and you had to go through the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of Agriculture was already being paid off by some American seed company and anything that conflicted - sorghum seed it was - didn't get in. This guy had connections in the White House here and he tried to push his way though and finally we put so much pressure on the Mexicans to allow this sorghum seed which was supposed to produce ten times as much sorghum as any other seed, you know, let some of it in the country. Mexico did finally let some in on an experimental basis and they said, "It's got to go to our experiment stations and then we got to try it out." But we were running up against this corruption all the time and at very high levels of the Mexican government.

Q: During this period, did the Viet Nam war play any role in Mexican-American relations or was it mainly Cuba?

LEONHARDY: Well, we had some demonstrations once in a while down in Mexico City which came out of the university system there but nothing very significant. It was not a real thorn in our side. The other thing, of course, we had, I wanted to get into, was these Presidential visits because... Kennedy had been down there in '62, that was before I was in Mexico City. Of course, he was assassinated while I was in Mexico City and the Mexicans had a real esteem for him, the whole populace. You'd go into even hovel houses and they'd have a picture of the Lord, maybe a picture of Los Ocardos and another one of Kennedy, you know. He was...

Q: I saw the same thing in Yugoslavia around that time. You'd see Kennedy and Tito in the smallest little huts.

LEONHARDY: When he went down to Mexico City in 1962, we could not put on his schedule that he was going to Guadalupe because of the strict separation of Church and State. But everybody knew it; everybody was on the road out. Well, anyway, you're familiar with the feeling between Johnson and Kennedy and his followers. So we had this first visit to the border and then we had... Lady Bird Johnson was supposed to go down in, I think about 1965-66, to dedicate a Lincoln statue. They had a Lincoln Park down there; they had this Lincoln statue and she was going to go down and dedicate it. Then Johnson decided he wanted to go, but it had to be kept top secret. There were only four people in the Department that knew about it: myself, the Assistant Secretary of State, the Deputy Assistant, and Secretary Dean Rusk. So we had to do all these extra preparations without anybody knowing it. I was involved in these meetings in the Department with the head of the public relations at the time, the Assistant Secretary, and it was decided that at four o'clock on such-and-such an afternoon it would be announced that Johnson would go. Well, I was at a meeting in his office at precisely that time, preparing for Lady Bird's visit and he gets a call on Johnson's going, and he came back into the room and said, "Did you know about this?" I said, "Sure, I knew about it." He said, "Well, why didn't you tell me?" I said, "I was sworn to secrecy." Johnson, as I say, had this love affair with Mexico but on that trip he sent Valenti and the other guy...

Q: Jack Valenti was a Hollywood publicist, I think.

LEONHARDY: Well, he was head of the Motion Picture Association...

Q: But he was...

LEONHARDY: He had Valenti and the other guy that's on Public TV a lot, I can't think of his name, went down ahead of time before Johnson made this decision and talked to our Ambassador and told him, they said, "Could you guarantee that there will be as big a crowd out for Johnson as there was for Kennedy?" And the Ambassador said, "How can I guarantee that?" he says, "All I can guarantee is that the Mexicans know how to get the crowds out and they'll do their best and there'll be a big crowd, but I can't tell you that it'll be bigger than the one Kennedy had." But that was indicative of that problem between the Kennedy people and the Johnson people. Then we had the final meeting...

After several years they re-routed the river and put three new bridges in El Paso. And Johnson was going to go down for the final act and it coincided with the Mexican President, Diaz Ordaz coming up to Washington first and then they were going to go down together to the border. So I was involved in planning, working with the Mexican Embassy on their President's visit up here and coordinating it with the White House and all this stuff and then I had to go down a day ahead of time to El Paso to help prepare for the itinerary down there. As I say, they had three bridges, they were going to have names on each bridge, one named for the U.S. person and one for a Mexican dignitary. The Mexicans had wanted Kennedy on one of the bridges and that didn't hit very well. Anyway, they thought they had one of the two names figured out ahead of time and they even had a brass plaque made for the one bridge and the other problem we had was that the Mexicans insisted that Johnson - they meet in the middle of this first bridge that had the plaque on it and they change cars and they get into the Mexican President's open car (which gave the Secret Service fits)...

Q: Particularly after Kennedy was assassinated in an open car.

LEONHARDY: But Johnson said, "We got to go ahead with it." So anyway, I went down a day or too ahead of time and we went through the whole drill, going into Juarez and around and back out the other new bridge and at the end of the thing, at the last bridge there was supposed to be a flag-raising ceremony on the new border. No water running through this yet but - it was still to be diverted. But anyway, we got to our flagpole with the flag and it stuck half-way up. This guy, Marty Underwood who was the public relations guy from the White House said, "If that happens..." he says, "We don't know whether the old man is going to raise the flag or not. He'll decide that at the last minute. But if he does and that thing sticks, it's going to be somebody's head." So anyway, the next morning, Joe Friedkin who was our Boundary and Water Commissioner went out there at five o'clock in the morning with a professional flag-raiser sergeant from Fort Bliss to work this thing up and down and make sure nothing would happen. Of course, Johnson did decide to raise the flag. But the headaches that went with all these preparations, getting crowds out and all that stuff, and dealing with the Governor of Texas, etc., it was a big operation.

So anyway, I try to think of other things that happened but this Presidential relationship was one. Another problem we had which was kind of amusing in retrospect was, some do-gooder Americans decided that - they heard from some priest that had been down with the Tarahumara Indians, which are in Chihuahua down in the mountains were starving and that they needed all kinds of things. And he came back to his Chamber of Commerce or his Rotary Club in Louisiana and made a talk about this and the next thing you knew (I'm trying to think of the name of the town down there - Lafayette, it was), he made a talk and he said, "These people need help." Well, some enterprising local citizen got up at the Rotary meeting and said, "We got to get help down to those people. Come on, we'll organize a committee, and so forth." They sent all this, they had fourteen train carloads full of stuff they sent down there, clothes - everything you could imagine they sent down there. Anyway, they got down to... No thought given about what happens when it gets to the border, see, so it gets down to El Paso and the Mexicans wouldn't let it across and it stood on the tracks for days and it became sort of a "cause celebre" and I had to go brief the Secretary on it, what's happening. Anyway, I was sitting in the office on a Saturday morning and the Congressman from that area called me from Louisiana and he had this Cajun sort of accent and he told about these people pouring their hearts out and getting all this stuff on this train and then the Mexicans wouldn't let it through and our consul general down there kept calling me and saying, "They're in the hands of a bunch of vultures that are going to charge them a whole bunch of money to get this stuff across." So this Congressman says, "What should I do?" And I said, "Well, I tell you, Mr. Congressman, if I were you I'd call the Ambassador and explain what your problem is," which he did and they worked out what I call a "Mexican Solution." He went to the Foreign Minister, Clio Flores, and said, "Well, let's work out something on this, you know." So the New York Times had a reporter that was reporting this, this was on the front page of the New York Times and finally this guy got tired of going out there. They finally unloaded all this stuff into an empty warehouse down there and so nothing was happening in the press or anything and the Mexicans would send a little truck over periodically and move some of the stuff and they finally got it very surreptitiously into the country. We don't know whether it ever got to the Tarahumara Indians or not but anyway that was sort of indicative of some of the problems you had on the border area.

Q: Well, you left this job in late 1967, was it? And then where?

LEONHARDY: It was early 1968, I went down to El Salvador and I was DCM down there.

Q: You were there from what? '68 until?

LEONHARDY: January '68 until March '72.

Q: Who was the Ambassador at the time?

LEONHARDY: The Ambassador at the time was Raul Castro who had been a judge - interesting guy - I've been in touch with him recently. He was a juvenile judge in Tucson when I was down on the border, so I knew him casually. He had been a foreign clerk in our consulate in Agua Prieta, Sonora, during the war. I think he was born in this town of Cananea. The consul there said, "You'll never get anywhere in our Foreign Service or anything." But then Castro immigrated to the States and he got a law degree from the University of Arizona; became a U.S. citizen, of course... So that was his first post, as a political appointee. As I say, we knew each other and we got along fine. He did some pretty good reporting and - he was a little bit biased, I would say. He got a little cross-wise with the so-called Catorce, the wealthier families there one time. But I was only there about two months and his wife was very seldom down there, she had ponies up in Arizona. Anyway, I'd been there about two months and I started hearing noises about Johnson coming down to El Salvador.

Q: Your friend!

LEONHARDY: My friend! Anyway, the upshot of it was that they were going to have a meeting (and I think we were helping promoting this) of the five Central American Presidents. There was a question of where this meeting was going to be and where Johnson would come and meet with them. All the other Ambassadors in the area gave about twenty-nine reasons why it shouldn't be in their country, but Castro wanted it in Salvador because it was getting a little hot in the kitchen for him and he wanted to get out and get another post. So he promoted it and it came to fruition.

The first the problem we had was that we had all these other Presidents, four other Presidents coming in with all their entourage and Johnson with his, how would we fit them all into San Salvador? But nobody knew where Johnson was going to stay, whether it'd be in the Residence or the hotel. Oh, the other real problem was where are we going to put all these people? They only had two first-class hotels in town - one was a fairly small one downtown and the one up on the side of a mountain where all the action was going to be and you had all the press plane coming down, of course, and the press all wanted to be where the action was. So I reserved a lot of rooms in the big hotel and the Foreign Office called me within a day and said, "You can't do this; we got all these other people coming in." Oh, the Ambassador came in to me and he said, "Terry, you've handled all these visits before, you're in charge." And another thing, we had to keep this all secret about Johnson coming down there right until the near end. He sent his advance group down, Liz Carpenter and Marty Underwood and we brought in, I think it was, forty-five tons of confidential equipment. All over the Embassy there was these great big huge cables and stuff and you'd pick up a phone and get the ranch or get the White House.

So I was in charge of this visit. I got the military, appointed somebody there, to take care of logistics and transport and all that stuff because I knew they could do it. Then I put the AID people in charge of this, and that, and parceled other jobs to our Foreign Service officers.

Then I put the CIA guy in charge of getting out the crowds. Well, you could write a book on the visit itself. But anyway, Marty Underwood came by my office almost every day, "What are you doing about getting the crowds? Remember the old man's spirits are down, the Viet Nam thing is collapsing..." So I brought him in to see the CIA Station Chief and he said, "Well, this is where we're going to put big signs across - string them clear across the street. We're going to have kids on this corner. He said, "Now, I want kids with homemade signs, no printed stuff, you know." And bands and music, and so forth. Anyway, but he says, "They're holding out one sign they're going to string across the street for suggestions from us." He says, "What would you like on the sign?" He says, "God, that's nice," he says, "Well, the old man's on a bit of a religious bit." "Now," he says, "Can't you say God bless LBJ in Spanish or something?" Anyway, they found an LBJ school and so Liz Carpenter gets on the phone to the White House and says, "I want you to get hold of Steinway. Got to have a piano for this school." Nobody could play it but anyway. "They owe us something. Get that piano out of Steinway, I want it on the next plane!" and that type of stuff - typical of what went on.

Anyway, when the advance group came in, they came in on the military side of the airport, I'll never forget, it was dark, no lights, and Liz Carpenter gets off the plane with her big straw hat and says, "Where are all the lights?" Mrs. Castro was not there, so my wife had to handle that end of things and she did a very beautiful job on it. One of our joint projects with the Salvadorans under our AID operation - one of the few things that I saw that I thought was worthwhile - was an educational project which we had. The Minister of Education had been in Japan and he wanted to revolutionize their whole educational system, modernize it, and he wanted to put TV sets as teacher's aides in every classroom in Salvador. There were many obstacles to overcome. They have these volcanoes all over the country. We brought tires in from Panama and used helicopters to deliver supplies. We had, I don't know, a lot of people - Americans - working with Salvadorans - working on these courses to put on TV. Johnson came down and pressed the button and that started the whole thing.

Part of the visit included a performance by the Air Force Strings. By coincidence they had an art show at the time which had no connection with the Presidential Visit, but it was in this hotel and after one meeting, Johnson came out and he said, "I want that painting; I want that one." And all of them had already been sold, or most of them and they had signs in Spanish "sold", you know. But nevertheless, off he goes with them.

Then finally he decided about the accommodations - we had to have the Presidential Suite in the hotel waiting for him and the Residence. And they came in to me - the advance group - on the second day and they said, "Does he realize - the Ambassador - does he realize they're going to kick him out? If Johnson comes in, he's got to leave the Residence?" I says, "No." He says, "How do you think he'll take it?" I said, "He'll take it." Anyway, I don't know how many thousands of dollars they put into that Residence in a hurry, lifting shower heads, putting carpets in...

Q: Shower head had to be, I think, eleven feet six inches or something like that. I recall there was special height that...

LEONHARDY: Anyway, they had to do that. It was a real three-day headache. I kept waking up in the middle of the night for weeks afterwards having nightmares about it. Anyway, I think one of the amusing things that happened on that visit was that - oh, there were several amusing things. Somoza from Nicaragua was one of the Presidents who attended. The El Salvadorian hosts had a picnic-barbecue thing out in a National Park just north of the city, where they had a waterfall and a deep canyon - a Secret Service nightmare - trees all over, and the Secret Service didn't want Johnson to go there, of course. But his public relations people did. And Somoza wasn't going to go for security reasons but he ended up going. So they had the big barbecue out there and, I remember, the head of tourism had an office out there and they had his phone wired some way. He said he picked it up one day and he got the ranch.

But anyway, after the visit was over... The Secret Service only left one household servant in the Residence and he was a half-Salvadoran and half-Chinese. His father had been a janitor in the Embassy some years past and his first name was Ovideo and I think his second two names were Chou Hernandez. Ovideo knew how to mix martinis just the way Johnson liked them, and so forth, and he had keys to everything and he knew where everything was in the Residence so on the way out to the airport after the visit, Johnson turned to our Ambassador and he said, "Before we get on anything else, I want to tell you I want that 'Chink' for the ranch." And the Ambassador says, "Well, he's the heart of our household." He said, "He knows where everything is." And he says, "It shouldn't be of any concern of yours because I'm assigning you as Ambassador to Bolivia." And he says, "I want you up to Washington within ten days and I want you to have the 'Chink' with you."

So we had to go through all the throes of getting Ovideo's visa arranged because there was still some leftover Chinese exclusions in the book and we had to get the White House housekeeper to sign a petition or something, which Immigration took over to her. But anyway, we went through this maneuver and Castro then went up to - he took Ovideo with him; we got the visa all ready. Off they go and he drops him off at the White House and all he had for identification was a Salvadoran passport. So Castro gave him his Ambassadorial card. On the back of it, he wrote something like this, "This is Ovideo Chou Hernandez. He works in the White House" or something like that. And said good-bye and Castro went out to Arizona and he came back with his wife and they were staying in the old Roger Smith Hotel. One day they went down to F Street to do some shopping and they walked by the White House and Ovideo was sitting up in Lady Bird's suite, looking out the window like a lost dog, trying to figure out, looking at everybody going up, "Is there anybody I know?" Finally, he saw the Castro's and he ran out of the room and down the circular staircase and out the front door. He got to the gate just about the time that they got there (that was before they had the security they got now) and so there was a big, burly cop there and he grabbed him by the nape of the neck and he says, "Who are you?" and he fished out this card that Castro... The cop said, "Do you know this guy?" and Castro says, "Yes, he works in there." And he followed them around like a lost sheep. After that, he did go out to the ranch and the last I heard of, he got an immigrant visa, of course, and he had a restaurant out in San Francisco, I think. That's a kind of an amusing story.

Q: Well, tell me, other than having the Presidential visit, what were the main sort of issues in Salvador during this '68 to '72 period?

LEONHARDY: One of the major issues was the three day war with Honduras.

Q: The Soccer War?

LEONHARDY: Yes, the Soccer War. That was a real tough one for us because our community found itself in a blackout in an uncivilized society. The rumors running around Salvador including the fear that the Hondurans were dropping paratroops up on the nearby volcano ready to capture the city. We had a young vice consul that just arrived from Mexico City. We'd known him when he was there - red-headed, red mustache and he still had Mexican plates on his car. During the crisis we all had to serve around the clock at the Embassy. Once he came down from the hotel up on the hill to the Embassy, and he was stopped either by this mob scene - mobs that were running around looking for Hondurans - or the police, but anyway, he was stopped and he had his American identification but, you know, they thought he must have come in from Honduras. He had a hard time, I remember.

We had to black out all our windows and put cardboard shades all over our windows in the Embassy on the top floor where we were working. We had to brief the resident Americans, you know. We had two types of Americans living in Salvador. We had what they call "residents" the ones that had been there and married into Salvadoran families and then we had those that were with American businesses down there. The Ambassador at that time was Bill Bodelar. He replaced our friend, Raoul Castro. Bill was very good about keeping the Americans briefed and what occupied me most during that time was briefing them on developments. But it was pathetic in a way to read the newspapers about what was happening, because the papers had the Salvadoran Army already to the Pacific Ocean, you know. As it turns out, they'd only advanced about six kilometers into Honduras; they captured one town.

This one town, there was an American priest, a Franciscan, the missionaries had about six other Franciscans back in the villages and he had all this radio stuff so that he could keep in contact with these people. When they captured this town, it's called Nueva Ocotepeque, they captured him. Of course, a lot of these fleeing villagers that fled the village, they'd leave their sewing machines and radios with him, so that when the Salvadorans captured his place - and they were pretty nasty, these people, they were stealing stuff - when they captured him they figured, "Boy, he's a big spy for the Hondurans. He's got all this radio equipment and everything else." So they brought him back as a prisoner to Salvador and then we got a call from the Foreign Office that they had him and so we got him out right away. I had lunch with him and I still get Christmas cards from him but we got him out - and saw him subsequently in Honduras - got him out to Guatemala and back to the States.

Then the Salvadorans built a great, big arch on the main - like the Arc de Triomphe - on the main street and their military, you know, the big victorious army coming back, and so forth. The OAS (Organization of American States), as you probably know, got into that act, and John Ford, who was a Foreign Service Officer who was with the OAS at that time, was meeting with all these high dignitaries of the OAS that were down there trying to stop this thing and, of course, they got it stopped.

But leading up to the conflict, of course, you could see that something was brewing because you had about three hundred thousand Salvadoran illegals, mostly farm peasants, that were in Honduras. You could even tell flying over, they tell me, where they lived because they had thatched roofs on their houses, compared to the other type of roof that the Hondurans had. Anyway, the Hondurans were very upset about the fact that there were so many Salvadorans in the country, even though they were industrious farming types that were not taking over anybody else's land. It was land that was just vacant. But they were making a big issue of it. The Hondurans threw all these hundred thousand peasants out and the Foreign Minister invited me to go over to the bridge where they were leaving Honduras with a number of other foreign Ambassadors and we'd asked these people, "What happened?" They said, "Well, the gangs just came in and set fire to our houses..." All they had was what they had on their backs plus a cage full of chickens or something, you know, or a pig. And for Salvador to have to absorb these hundred thousand people when they were already overpopulated was a kind of a real problem.

And then we had the soccer teams playing for the playoffs for the World Cup and they had the first game over in Honduras and, I think, the Hondurans won or something and the Salvadorans claimed they were treated very badly over there and all that stuff. Then the Hondurans came to Salvador and the Salvadorans made an effort to try to have no problems, but anyway, the Hondurans went back with exaggerated stories about their women being raped and all that stuff, you know, and it just started to heat up. Then there were overflights by Hondurans on the border and all kinds of incidents.

Then, I remember, I was told that I couldn't talk to any of the Peace Corps volunteers that were up there, that they were apolitical, but I met them at a Fourth of July picnic and they divulged some of the things that were happening. Of course, there was no defined border between the two countries in a large part of the territory. Anyway, you could see that something was going to happen. Past feelings arose. Out at the airport, the civilian air people had a club and they were all made part of the Salvadoran military, they were reservists. One night when they went over and they decided to avenge everything, the Salvadorans who had been thrown out. But anyway, to avenge all this, they had this air raid that night. None of these planes were equipped to do any of this stuff, but they had some old dud bombs that they got from the military - only maybe one out of twenty would go off - and they flew over towards Tegucigalpa or somewhere and drop - not that far just across the border - they dropped some of these things. Well, anyway, my wife and I were up on the roof of our house the next morning because we got word from our Embassy in Tegucigalpa that their military was coming back with their planes and they had a pretty good air force and they came in and unloaded bombs, a lot of them out by the airport and they knocked out a big refinery and did a pretty effective job.

But anyway, there were some amusing things came out of this little conflict. One was the general, General Madrono, who was the head of the Salvadoran National Guard, was a real tough guy. He lived not too far from the Embassy. He had at least ten radio antennas on his house and he was a very difficult guy to deal with. You never knew what he was thinking or anything else. But he led his National Guard and they were the ones that captured this town in Honduras but on the way up, he stopped at a sugar plantation belonging to a friend of ours and he said he needed his mules. And he said, "I can't. They're the heart of my operation. I can't give up my..." "Oh, yes, but you've got to be patriotic, you know. We got a war going on. What's wrong with you? I want the mules." So he took the mules. Then the guy says, "We got one mule here that does twice as much work as any other mule, named Jorge; can we keep him?" "Nope, all of them go." So off he went with the guy's mules all for the sake of the country and they get up into Honduras and they capture this town and then they were using Texaco road maps with no indication where the mountains were or anything and they got up into these mountains and they got surrounded by the Hondurans. Then the war was stopped but they just had their K-rations and that's all, no meat furnished. Anyway, after the thing was over, this guy from the sugar plantation went in to see General Madrono and he said, "By the way, whatever happened to my mules? He said, "We ate 'em." He said, "Jorge, too?" He said, "Jorge too." But anyway, it was sort of a tense time.

Q: Did the Embassy play any role in trying mediation or...

LEONHARDY: No, we left that up to the OAS but we were in touch with them all the time and, of course, and our friend, John Ford, who was the American with the OAS delegation. He would come in to send these telegrams up to Washington. Then he'd stay up all night and debrief me. He'd come in in the morning all bleary-eyed and send these telegrams up and he'd have pockets - he'd been a court reporter and he was in the FBI before he got in the Foreign Service - but anyway, he wrote shorthand (as I did one time) and he had all his shorthand notes and, God, the telegrams were long, four or five page telegrams. Then one time he came in and got the telegrams off, but then he woke up in the middle of his nap in the day and he came rushing in the Embassy and he'd found some notes in his pocket that he hadn't communicated, so he had to send another telegram. The funny thing was that the women, mostly from the wealthier section of Salvador, protested the OAS action and the best way they could do that was to protest around the Embassy. They marched around our Embassy for the better part of a day, I remember, all in black, you know. We were indirectly involved, of course, with that OAS representative and we were keeping Washington informed but we weren't in on the actual negotiations.

Q: In El Salvador, because, of course, this became much more important later on, from what I understand, I've never served there, that you did have a small group of wealthy families who pretty much ran things. Was this...

LEONHARDY: Well, I think that part is not correct. When we were there they had - the governing party was called the PCN (Partito de Concilacion Nacional), I think it was, which is one of the smaller parties now but it controlled the politics of the country and the major opposition was the Christian Democrats. They had a parliament, "assemblia," and the Christian Democrats had a pretty good parliamentary representation. They got to the point, when I left there, that they had over one-third of the votes; parliamentary rules required two-thirds votes to pass on foreign aid operations, and so forth; so they were of influence. Then the mayor of the city who later became President, of the Christian Democrats, Napoleon Duarte, "Napo," was a Christian Democrat. Later they controlled several other cities; so they were a very influential group. As far as the so-called Catorce or the fourteen families as they used to be called, we had a political officer who wrote a very good report on that whole business at one time, pointing out that they really had lost a lot of their influence. True, they did have influence, but they didn't control things as they had in previous years. The other thing that really impressed me when I was in Salvador after having been in Mexico was the honesty of their public servants. You didn't - except for some hanky-panky in the military - you never heard about the Minister of Public Works taking bribes, and so forth, like you did with every other country.

Q: They're very hard-working people, aren't they?

LEONHARDY: They are; that's why they were so successful over in Honduras, even the peasants. They're generally very, very hard-working people, industrious people. They had, at the time, it still exists, the Central American Common Market. The Central American Common Market in Salvador was doing very well except that there were a lot of violations of... When Somoza created a family industry, he wouldn't allow any of competitor's products in from Salvador, for instance, and that type of stuff was going on.

Q: Somoza being the President of Nicaragua.

LEONHARDY: Anyway, they had a lot of, for instance, they had a huge, big, shoe factory there but then, of course, we had a lot of American industry down there - a big cigarette factory - and we had three or four other big outfits. I remember that one of the big department stores down there built a new store and put in escalators and all that stuff, you know, all being very much modernized. So from a commercial standpoint, and economic standpoint, Salvador was way ahead of the rest of Central America. I think that came, in a way, from the fact that they were just a little postage stamp of a country and they had to do it. But they modernized, they built a huge, big, new port over on the Pacific and modernized that and the old port was just sort of abandoned.

As I said, their education, they were doing a great job in education. They had six normal schools in the country when I got there and then this new Minister of Education knocked it down to one - a good one. But he was constantly being plagued by the radical-left teachers union. He was a bachelor and he had a penthouse apartment with a sort of a deck outside. He used to go from there to his office by helicopter so he'd avoid these people who were demonstrating. That was one of the first things I saw when I got there. He later became Foreign Minister, later was assassinated by the left.

The political thing was... They had several elections when I was down there. They had an election for the legislature, the "Assemblia," and elections for mayors, and so forth. I went around to the polls with a political officer, an assistant, and so forth, and I thought it was pretty orderly, pretty well-run. But anyway, they finally got to the point where the existing President finished his term. Then Duarte was running for President, as you may recall, against a colonel in the military or something, sort of hand-picked by his predecessor; his name was MolinThey asked me to stay on until the electoral process was finished and that was in the spring of '73, early '73, January, February. Anyway, that election was... They tried to have a sort of U.S. way of presenting the vote over TV. We sat up and watched these returns coming in from the city and the province. It was well-known that the city would vote for the Christian Democrats. It would come out with a pretty big majority but the provinces - and the smaller towns - would probably be held by the government party. Well, the vote coming in - they counted up until midnight -showed that the PDC had a big margin in the city and they were taking quite a bit in the country. So the next morning I went over with the political officer to the head of the electoral commission who was known to be a crook. First thing I told him, I said, "You guys lost this election." He said, "What?" I said, "Yes." Well, they suddenly cut it off at midnight, I remember; when it started looking bad, they cut it off. He says, "Oh, no, no. We're going to win it." I said, "Well." He says, "We still got a lot of votes coming in from the provinces." And I said, "Well, you're not going to be able to make up this huge margins that the PDC got in the city." He says, "Oh, yes," he started fishing around, "Yes, we're going to make it up." Well, they were stealing votes, of course. But that's the only time I ever saw any irregularities.

Well, after the election, of course, there was a rebellion of sorts and even the military were involved, some of them. But it didn't catch and Duarte was put in jail. He was enlisted, sort of, when the thing looked like it was going to go, the rebellion leaders got him in on it. But he wasn't the leader of it. So I left Salvador about that time, but anyway, he later became, as you know, became President of Salvador but he was a firm anti-communist and that's why the rebel element down there later didn't like him at all, of course, they considered him a traitor.

Q: Was there a communist Cuban element in Salvador during the time you were there?

LEONHARDY: Well, there was a communist party. They were outlawed and they didn't participate in the electoral process but Shafee Kandal who was of Lebanese extraction and his brother, and a guy named Quetano Carpio were known commies; they were never imprisoned or anything down there but they were operating. But they didn't have a big following, really.

Q: I felt we might stop at this point here. You left in when? 197-?

LEONHARDY: I left in the spring of '72.

Q: Well, this has been very interesting. Tell me just one thing before we quit. What was your impression of Bill Bowdler because Bowdler was not treated very well by, really, Senator Helms' people, I mean at the time, although it was when the Reagan Administration came in. What was your impression of Bowdler?

LEONHARDY: Well, I have nothing but the highest respect for Bill, who arrived at post in November 1968. He was a very fine, able officer and he left there about a year before I left, went up to Guatemala, and then he was succeeded in El Salvador by Henry Catto who was a political appointee. But Bill - we still see him once in a while, not very many people that served with him ever - he lives down here in Sharps, Virginia, down on the Rappahannock, in a house that his father-in-law had when he was a preacher in a local church there, I think. We were down there about a year ago to see him and we hope to get down there in the next few weeks.

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Q: Today is the 22nd of April, 1996, and we left off a very important... Would you tell when and where you were in Guadalajara, Mexico, from when to when?

LEONHARDY: I arrived there in the spring of 1972, no, I'm trying to think; when you're in the tropics you forget the seasons. Yes, March of 1972. Since my earlier tour in Nogales, consulates in Mexico decreased to ten.

Q: And how long were you there?

LEONHARDY: And I was there until the fall of '73.

Q: What was your job and what was the situation like in Guadalajara when you got there?

LEONHARDY: Well, it was supposed to be a very peaceful place compared to where I was, where I under guard during the four years in Salvador. It's the second largest city in Mexico. We had a huge number of Americans - forty-five-fifty thousand Americans lived down there, at least in the winter, or maybe even year round - and we had six states in the consular district where we had a huge number of Americans like San Miguel de Allende and Puerto Vallarta and places like that - resort areas. Then we had a university - the Autonomous University of Guadalajara. We had about, oh, around twelve hundred American medical students down there that couldn't get into med schools up here and went down there. Most of them, I think, were pretty decent people but there were some bad apples in the group too that were involved in smuggling and other nefarious things. We had more trouble with those medical students, from a protection and welfare standpoint, than we had with all the other Americans. The Americans down there were generally involved in a lot of charity work and they had a big American society and they did a lot of wonderful projects for poor kids in need of medical treatment and that type of stuff. They were very active in many areas and I think were a real credit to the area.

Q: So they weren't a protection and welfare problem, were they? The older citizens?

LEONHARDY: No. Very seldom did you have any problem from that group.

Q: Could you talk about... You were Consul General. Could you talk a bit about the problems you had and how you dealt with them with these medical students?

LEONHARDY: Well, the medical students, they were mostly... For instance, I can give you one good example: this one boy's father was a doctor in New York and the kid got in trouble with drugs or something and the Guadalajara University actually expelled him, I think. Then he calls me and raises hell, you know, about his kid getting kicked out of school and I said, "Well, you have to take that up with the university authorities. Then he said, "What do we got you down there for?" and all that type of stuff. "I'm a taxpayer."

Then I remember one time a bunch of them came to my door on a Sunday afternoon and one of them had been bitten by a rabid dog and they couldn't leave the country because their visas or their permits to stay in Mexico would expire if they went back into the States. I said, "Well, get your rabies vaccination here, get treated here." "Well, we don't like that type of treatment here. They have a new medicine in the States that we want." And I said, "Well, if you're that anxious to get to the States and get treatment, I'd call our consul in Brownsville or I'd call the duty officer at our consulate and tell him to call Brownsville and arrange for you guys to cross over, or for somebody to come over to give you this special vaccination that you think you have to have." And I gave them the name of the duty officer, and so forth and they never went back. But they just rap on your door. I think they were on drugs myself, that was my feeling.

Q: This was the height of the American involvement in drugs, wasn't it, of youth?

LEONHARDY: Well, that was one of our major problems down there. When I was down there we had six states where we had more Americans, not only retiree types or older people but youth coming down there, especially in the summertime. Under Mexican law, if you were found even with a marijuana cigarette, you were accused of use and possession and charged immediately. Within seventy-two hours they either decided you were innocent or guilty and they'd throw you in the tank and you'd be there for a year, maybe, before you ever got out. It was a real problem for the Mexicans because, you know, they had to feed these people - meager rations, of course, but anyway they had to take care of them.

Some boy scout from Keokuk, Iowa, gets in jail, he never did anything wrong in his life and all of the sudden he's in a Mexican jail. And the same thing, we'd get piles of correspondence on each case. They'd get to their Congressman then you had the three day reply rule; you had to get back that you were investigating. Then you have to send in a new report, you know. So I decided that the way around this was to get the Mexicans in bed with me on this and I went around, I made a very intensive effort to become friendly with the mayors, with the governors, with the chiefs of police in the bigger cities, and with the prosecutors and the whole thing in the six states. I spent a lot of time on the road. I'd bring one of our younger officers with me and I preached the same sermon to all of these people. I said, "They're a problem for you and they're a problem for me." And I said, "The one way to resolve it is as soon as you pick up some young kid..." Most of these kids were innocent kids; they just come down there, and they think, "Well, we can do this in Mexico. Nobody's going to bother us." And all of the sudden they're in big trouble. And I said, "Then you bring charges against them and they languish in your jails for a year and you have to go through all these problems, and I have to go through them too." And I say, "The best way to resolve this for both of us is for you to just turn them over to your immigration authorities and have them kicked out as undesirables." They said, "Gee, that's a great idea." When I left Mexico, I think, maybe there were six people in jail in the six states in my consular district out of a hundred eighty-five around Mexico. But I also said, "If you catch some of these people involved in the trade, you know, throw the book at them. We don't like those people any more than you like them." So that's another type of problem.

Then of course, we had a huge visa operation, of course. But getting away from the strictly consular aspects of the job, we had a lot of economic reporting, there was a lot of industry in the area, in different states. Then we had a lot of political, you know, elections going on all the time, both local elections and state elections that we had to report on. We had some threats against personnel. Most of the time, they would come from the local police or the local city government would inform us and they would send out some police and say, "We want to follow you around for a few days. There's been some kind of noises," you know.

Q: Who would be threatening or where did you feel the danger was coming from?

LEONHARDY: Well, the local police just said, "We've had some indications that some of these people want to do something to you." They never did come out with any particular...

Q: Well, I can think of two groups - one would be the drug people. I'm talking about the... And the other would be the anti-American extreme leftists.

LEONHARDY: Right, right. Getting back to that, we had a DEA office...

Q: Drug Enforcement Agency office.

LEONHARDY: And two of these fellows were very good friends of mine and we used to do a lot of bird shooting together. They had assignments in the States and then come to Mexico and one of them said, "When I first got there," he says, "I can't wait to get out of this place because it's so dangerous."

He said, "You know, they're all over the place." He told me about an experience he had when he first got to Guadalajara. He said, "Nobody knows who I am." And he went out to a bar which had a motel connected with it, out on the main highway, where a lot of tourists come in and out. This was also a hangout for big drug dealers. He knew that from intelligence, of course. He went out there, he says, "Nobody knows me. I'm going to go in the bar and just sniff it out." So he goes up and has a drink and he hadn't been there more than five minutes and one of these drug guys came up to him and told him what his name was. They said, "We understand you just arrived."

Anyway, both of them told me about raids that they would go on. They didn't participate actually in the raids, they would sit out in a car and wait until the local federal police went in and raided these places. Then they told me about how a lot of these people were paying off and just all of the sudden let them go, you know. "Oh, you belong to... Oh, go ahead." So they had the feeling that they were getting nowhere. One of the problems I had with this whole thing... We used to have these consular meeting up in Mexico city - consular get-togethers with consuls from all over - and I brought it up and I was very unpopular for having brought it up but I said, "What if an American is a drug dealer. He gets involved down here. My DEA guys tell me about the horrible torture these people go through. They use a cattle prod on them; they use all kinds of electric shocks and everything else on them." And I said, "We, as American consular officers, have to see that their rights are observed under Mexican law." All I got from our female consul general at the Embassy at the time was, "Go to the Generals and tell them not to be so mean." Anyway, I said, "One of these days, we're going to get somebody who gets involved in drugs - some American - who's going to have good connections in the States and all hell's going to break loose when the word gets out that they've been tortured." And so, just before I left Guadalajara, that actually happened. We had a young fellow who had influence and he was involved in drug trade - American - and they grabbed him and my DEA guys told me about the torture that this guy was going through. And we get a letter from a Congressman, from the State Department, an inquiry from a Congressman, and he'd gotten a letter out of the jail, he snuck it out some way and got it to his mother who went to the Congressman and we get the three day report. "We understand this is happening." I had a very good second man at the consulate at the time, that I'd served with before.

Q: Who was that?

LEONHARDY: Ernie Gutierrez, one of the visa officers. You may have... Ernie went over and talked to the head government official who the consulates knew was involved in payoffs and stuff; and he got very upset that we should be protesting this thing. And I sent two reports up to the Embassy; one was unclassified saying we went to the top man and he's says they're not doing it - denies it, you know. Then I sent a classified report up telling what we think really happened and I said, "You decide up in Washington what you want to tell the Congressman." But anyway, just before I was grabbed down there, the governor who was a very straight guy, I will always be convinced, a nice guy.

Q: Who was that?

LEONHARDY: His name was Arosco Romero. I used to see him a number of times and I had this conversation with him one day and he said, "If you ever hear about any of my people, you know, or officials around here, getting involved in drugs, I'd appreciate it if you could tell me." And I came home and told my wife about that and she said, "Oh, God, don't get involved." But about that time we had a consular conference up in Mexico City and we had a Deputy Assistant Secretary named Bob Hurwitz came down and he said, "Your marching orders now are, you've got to get involved in drugs - in stamping out drugs." And I said, "What about the DEA? That's what they're supposed to do. They're getting paid; those guys know what they're doing." "No, everybody's got to get involved." So one of these DEA guys told me one day, he said, "You know, we were in on a raid - we were waiting outside on a raid - and they went into this place, right near where I live, in a very fashionable area of the city, and they had all this marijuana stacked and classified like coffee, you know, high grown, middling, and so forth, and prices and money lying all over the place. They grabbed about five guys, the Mexicans did, and one of them happened to be a candidate for the government party for congress, the PRI. As soon as they found out who he was, they just let him go. I told the governor about this, and my wife just had a fit. She said, "Oh, God."

Anyway, we were planning a new home up in Montana and she was going up to Denver to meet with some friends of hers that were architects and do some planning, so she left me at home with the kids. And it was around early May of '73. We had a good neighbor consul group which was mostly over the east side of Mexico, out of Monterrey and the Texas-Rio Grande Valley but they decided to expand a little bit so it was decided to come over on the west side of the mountains and they had their confab in Guadalajara. We had the consuls from the border and several other places and Mr. Sowsa - Javier Sowsa of the Sowsa tequila firm had a big party for them and they used his convention hall, and so forth, to have their meeting. So there's a lot going on and my wife had left to go to Colorado and I'd taken her out to the airport and went to dinner that night at this big confab. So the next day, I was... Have I mentioned yet the terrible administrative support we received from our Embassy in Mexico City?

Q: Who was the Ambassador at this time?

LEONHARDY: The Ambassador was, I'm trying to think of his name, he was a career man, well, I'll think of it [Editor: Ambassador Robert McBride]. Anyway, he had turned the... When I had been in the Embassy before, we had a supervising Counsel for Consular Affairs, and he ran herd on all the consulates both on consular policy and administrative studies, and then, I think, they abolished that job or something, but then they turned the responsibilities over to the DCM [Editor: DCM in 1973 was Robert Dean]. Then when I got there, the Administrative Counselor - for whom I had very little respect - was in charge of this thing.

Q: Who was he?

LEONHARDY: I'll think of his name [Editor: Victor Dikeos]. But anyway, he later became head of Security in the Department of State, which was really amazing. But anyway, the Guadalajara consulate had two old cars. When I'd been in Salvador, the Ambassador and I used to change cars all the time. We never had one that looked alike. But down in Guadalajara, we had two old black Plymouths, always giving us maintenance problems and you couldn't switch from one car to another because they were both alike, you know. So we were easily singled-out, you know, going up and down the street. But getting back to this drug thing, I did inform the Governor about this incident and my wife, as I say, was upset, worried that the drug people would get at me.

Anyway, the next day, in the afternoon, our DEA guys had been working with the local police on a demonstration project to show the locals what the dangers of drugs were. They had a big exhibit down in the main police station and I went down to that. I should precede that by saying that I kept agitating about these cars. I also agitated about getting a driver because I had to go to all these functions downtown in the city and I'd have to spend a half hour looking for a parking place and all this stuff. We had a very inefficient administrative officer and the embassy told him we could hire a chauffeur so he hired one of the guards in the consulate who claimed to have had chauffeuring experience. But the first two or three days I had him, I was just nervous all the time I was driving with this guy; he obviously didn't have - if he had any experience, he'd forgotten it all. Anyway, that day, I went down to this police station. This was on the fourth of May; the next day, Friday, was a big Mexican holiday, Cinco de Mayo. I went down to the police station to participate and be there for the opening of this big exhibit. I went with the chauffeur and then he drove me back to the consulate and I said to myself, "I don't want to drive anymore with him." So I dismissed him for the day and I drove home. I'd invited these consular officers from the other areas of Mexico to a reception over at the house and I had it all set up. My wife had worked on it before she left and had it all set up.

The other thing that is very important in this whole thing is, about three or four days before I had my incident, we had a guy from Security in Mexico City came down and he was changing the locks in the consulate and doing some work. He said, "Haven't you been told about the possibility that something might happen to you or other consular officers in Mexico?" And I said, "No." And I asked our administrative officer, he said, "No, no, I haven't heard anything down here." I said, "Well, it must not have been very important if they didn't feel that they had to call me and warn me, you know." Which they didn't. So anyway, when I left the police station, left the consulate, started driving home, we always - I'd learned that in Salvador - we varied our routes but in Guadalajara it was not easy because you had the main drag that went out right near our house and then I would cut over, once in a while, just before I got to the big intersection and go down a very narrow one-way street, across another big street, and into a narrow street that was one-way, went by the American school on one side and some kind of a church on the other. It even had trees in the middle of the street. Anyway, I was waiting for this light to go across the second big thoroughfare and when I got into this narrow street, these guys were waiting. They knew I would come down there once in a while, they'd been casing me, and so there was a guy drove right in front, he was coming the other way, and I said, "God, I've seen people driving down the street the wrong way a number of times, you know." It was nothing unusual but then this guy swerved around and blocked my way, right in front of me. I got a good look at him, you know, and I thought, "what is this crazy guy doing?" and the next thing I knew there was a car behind me and these guys rush me, came in, and one of them had an automatic pistol and they opened the door, they pointed the gun at me, you know, and opened the door and they came in. They pushed me over - there were three of them - they pushed me over. The one guy got into the driver's seat and he couldn't get the car started which was par for the course and so they hauled me out and they threw me in the back seat of the car of the guy that was waiting there. They put a blindfold over me right away and muzzled my mouth and threw me down on the seat and took off. Of course, I'd heard about incidents like this and now it's happening to me. Anyway, it was still daylight and some people told me afterwards that they were having a party up in a big building and they looked down and saw all this thing going on, you know. But they took me - they didn't drive very far. It couldn't have been more than about... But they changed cars twice and then they brought me into this house which was a kind of a row house in a very decent area of the city. Of course, I tried to engage them right away, but they were very incommunicative. They took all my clothes off, except my shorts - my underwear - and they had me in a room about as big...

Q: We're talking about a room about eight by ten or something.

LEONHARDY: Yes, it was about this big and it had some windows but the windows... Well, of course, I couldn't see, I was blindfolded, but I could tell there was no light coming in the windows. They had me on a hard bed. The first thing they asked me was, "Are you on any medicine or do you have any medical problems?" I thought, well, I'm going to give them a hard time. I said, "Yes, I've got a bad heart." "What are you taking for it?" I said, "Well, right now I'm not on any medicine." But there was not much conversation. I said, "What do you plan to do with me?" you know, I kept asking questions in Spanish, of course, but I got no real responses. They said, "We've made some demands on the Government." That's all they'd say. They had loud, Mexican ranchero music going on in the building. They'd taken me upstairs; there was an upstairs room. I remember it had a circular staircase. They would bring me some food from time to time. They always had somebody in the room with me. One guy was sort of... he would answer a few questions once in a while.

Q: Let's stop here.

LEONHARDY: I even engaged him in a little conversation. And there was a bathroom just off this room with a one step up, I remember. I started playing detective from word one, when I got in there, to try and figure out where I was. Anyway, the food was not very good, of course, but they gave me some scrambled eggs or something and I wasn't very hungry anyway. But I did talk to this guy a little bit and I said, "You know, what do you have me here for?" He said, "Well, this is a protest against our government." I said, "Well, why don't you try the democratic process." He said, "Oh, we've tried that and it doesn't work. The PRI, they're all a bunch of crooks." And he went into all this business of how bad the government was, and I said, "Well, I tend to agree with you." I said, "I don't like the way you want to resolve it." So I tried to find out what their demands were, what were they demanding of the government and they said, "Well, we want to get some prisoners released and we want to get word to the government how we feel about them, you know." That was about it. But anyway, I said, "Well, if you're going to wait for prisoners to be released," I said, "I'm going to be here forever." Then I kept thinking about the fact that the next day was Cinqo de Mayo...

Q: Which is Mexican Independence Day.

LEONHARDY: That's a precious Mexican holiday, a Saturday, and then Sunday nothing gets done so I said, "Nobody's even going to do anything before Monday because they're all off on holiday, at the beaches and taking their vacations, you know." So I just tried to think, imagine what was happening on the outside. Then, of course, my wife was up in the States.

What the kidnappers were doing, of course, I found out afterward... They were in contact... I had a very good friend who was with the telephone company there and he assisted in getting a new telephone line put in right away to handle separate communications, and so forth, and they sent some people down from the Embassy, one was from USIA, to deal with the press, and we had big jacaranda trees out in front and there were reporters up in those trees and the whole damn place was surrounded. Anyway, the kids - our two young daughters - they were three and five at the time - were home with the ninera. But anyway, they would fill me in later.

The kidnappers knew that my wife had come back. I didn't know how she'd come back but she'd gotten back and they would call and make demands on my wife and they'd say - or not demands but they'd tell her where to get messages. The Embassy and the State Department was trying to get her out of the act. They said, "Let them go to the Mexican Government. Don't you get involved." And she said, "Look, this is my husband and I'm getting involved when it's his life and I'm standing right there." Which I'm glad she did. But anyway, they'd say, "There's a message behind the statue of the Virgin in such-and-such a church and then we'd have to send a messenger from the Consulate down there - one of the Mexican boys who worked for USIA who did a beautiful job. Anyway, they'd pick up these messages and they say, "You've got to get in touch with the government to do this or you got to do this" or something. But anyway, the next day after I was in there for a while, they were very ebullient, very happy, because they said the government was going to accede to their wishes. One of their demands was to publish their manifesto on the front page of the major newspapers of the country, that was one; the other one was to release a number of prisoners - I think there were thirty-two altogether and they were all over the country. They weren't just in Guadalajara; some of them were clear up on the border.

Q: While you were talking and hearing about this, where did you figure these people were coming from, I mean, politically?

LEONHARDY: Well, as I say, they were in the left wing. They tried the PRI and they said that, at least this one guy said, "I was involved with the PRI but they're a bunch of crooks and we gotta' unseat them." And I'll get to the political thing a little later.

Anyway, I learned later they were operating out of another place. There was a lot of back-and-forth going on, cars coming in and out, in and out and you could hear all these noises and chatter but nothing distinguishable. After I was there, I think it was on the following day, sometime in the afternoon, they took my blindfold off but they all had hoods with little slits, you know, and gloves. They wanted me to write some letters. They wanted me to write a letter to the Governor and write a letter to the head of the Consular Corps, the Consular Corps was all non-career people, except for us, and to my wife, I think, saying that I was all right and that physically I hadn't been bothered, and that I was being treated all right, and so forth. I think they had some other phrase in there they wanted me to put in and I refused to do it because I didn't... But anyway, the end result was that they, of course, got these letters to them, I got a letter to my wife, and all the letters were delivered, because she'd get calls saying pick up, you know, come to this church, or somebody had to come to it. They did tell me that some of their people were getting out of jail, and so forth, and I think it was on a Sunday morning, they told me that - or sometime on Sunday - that their people had been released from jail and that they were being sent out of the country. I said, "Where? Cuba?" and they didn't respond to that but anyway I suspected that would be the place.

It's just a miracle to think that this could happen on a holiday weekend. I've heard stories afterwards, of course, about how they brought these people in from long distances, and so forth, and somebody from the Foreign Office, I think, accompanied the plane to Cuba. They had thirty-two guys on there. One of them was the brother of the guy that blocked my way. But anyway, this was on a Sunday morning, they said, "We got our people out." I said, "Well, what are we waiting for?" And they said, "Well, we got certain things to do, and so forth." I said, "Are you waiting for nightfall?" And they sort of implied that might be the case. Then shortly thereafter, they came into the room with some recording equipment and they had some kind of a piece of paper they were reading from, written by one of their higher-ups somewhere, that was not there, an interrogation and they started off by asking me, they said, "You did these horrible things over in Viet Nam, killed all these people" and all this stuff, you know. And then they mentioned the My Lai incident in Viet Nam, and so forth. And then they said, "What do you think about that?" And I said, "Well, both sides signed a peace treaty in Paris and I'm happy as a clam that they did it. I think it was just wonderful." I said, "As far as I'm concerned, it's resolved." Well, they didn't have any follow-ups; see, all they do is ask the questions, somebody else had written this, you could hear him rattling this paper, and then they got into the Dominican Republic and our intervention there, which I could weasel around on those things pretty easily because I knew the background but they asked me a number of questions but no follow-through. You see, they were just... Anyway, after they finished this, after about a half-hour of this interrogation - anywhere from twenty minutes to a half-hour - I was pretty exhausted because it was a grueling thing to have to go through. I told them, I said, I pretended my heart was bothering me. They had some woman there; several times there were women in the room and she immediately grabbed my pulse to see how my heart was doing. But anyway, they said, "Well, we've got a few more questions to ask you," you know, and so they gave me a little rest and then they came back and that was when they got mostly on Latin America and stuff. Then they terminated that thing and then I went through the usual waiting process for a while. Finally, they came up late in the afternoon and... Once in a while, I'd try to crack a joke or do something to see what the reaction was - nothing.

Then they brought a different guy in the room and he came up with a pair of pants for me to get on. I was always blindfolded and they had me gagged most of the time, but they'd take that off when they fed me and then I could converse with them. Near the end, they sort of left it off all the time. The pants were about a foot too long, you know. I said, "I've been in here for three days, you couldn't do a better job?" Then the guy sort of laughed, you know, a little bit. Then shoes that didn't fit, and so forth. Anyway, as I said, all the time I was in there I was trying to play a little detective and I knew just about where I was in location because I knew I wasn't far away from home. I knew I was near the main highway going northwest because it's Highway 15 and it goes under these underpasses and you could hear these trucks changing gears and then a train went by and I knew there had to be a sort of a vacant place in the area because you couldn't hear the trains, the sound was muffled, until they got right near the place and then it was loud and then it would be muffled again. I was trying to think of how we could catch these guys if I ever got out of this mess or how the Mexicans could catch them. Anyway, they finally started dressing me and this guy had this sub-machine gun, I could hear him cocking and uncocking it. Then it started getting almost dark; it was dark actually and they had me up at the top of this circular staircase and then they led me down the stairs and put me in the back seat of this car. There were two of them in front and the guy that I'd had some conversation with was in the back with me. We waited for quite a while and I said, "You know, what are we waiting for?" They said, "Well, we got some people coming," or something. Then the two of them, one of them in the back and one in the front, left. There was only one guy up front and he was trying to get the radio on, he kept kicking the dashboard, you know, and trying... Finally, about a half-hour later, they returned. They laid me down on the back seat and they put a serape over me and then they put an ammunition case on top of my stomach. There was one guy in the back seat, two in the front and I listened for every sound as we were going along, wherever we were going. I asked them; they said, "Oh, we're going to release you somewhere," they implied anyway. But one doesn't really know whether they were going to take you out and shoot you or... But I had a feeling - they'd gotten their demands met. The one demand that they made; the one thing that delayed this whole process was that they were able to get their demands met that I mentioned.

But I didn't know that they then added additional demand and that was a million pesos, they wanted. And they made that on the Government and the Government called the Governor and told him to get the money out. This was on a Sunday and certain denominations it had to be, and he sent his top aide to make this payment and they told him he had to wear a straw hat and a red handkerchief around his neck. I happened to have an old red bandanna - a handkerchief - around the house and my wife got it to the Governor. He went down to the bank, he and his people, and got this money out. This guy paid the million pesos which is about eighty thousand bucks in those days; it wouldn't be that much today. But anyway, that was all unbeknown to me, of course. They didn't tell me that; that was one of the reasons for the delay in releasing me. Anyway, that night when we took off, I knew that we'd crossed a railroad track and I knew that we were getting into the center of the city because the lights were brighter, and so forth. Finally they got to a place on a street and they just said, "You can get out here. Don't take the blindfold off until after we get away." And I said, "There's a place to sit down?" and the place to sit down was the curbstone, of course. So I had these oversize shoes and oversize pants on and I walked down the street.

I got in front of a house that was just flush with the street and there was a stairway going up into the house from the street. Servants of this household, were sitting out on the front steps and one of the ladies of the house - they were two old widows (I don't know if they were ever married or not) but two nice ladies anyway - she was just unlocking her door to go in the house and I came up and I told them who I was, and they said, "Oooh!" Of course it was all headlines in the paper, you know. So she said, "Come on in." So I went in and the first thing they did was get a bottle of whiskey out and they said, "You need a drink, don't you?" and I said, "I could use one." It was one of these bottles that had a hard cap to get off, you know, so I went over to help her. "Oh, no, no, you don't do that. We do that. You're too weak to be doing that."

But anyway, from there I called home and my wife, of course, was excited. So they sent three people over from the Consulate - one was my good friend in DEA, another one was the young USIA fellow that carried all my messages, and the other one was our Consul General from Monterey [Editor: Edward P. Dobyns]. They came over and got me. Now my wife knew these newshawks were out in front of the house, you know, she had to figure a way to get me in passed the press. There was an old entryway on the side street and the door had been sort of rusted or something - one of these grates - and it was full of vines and stuff but she got that thing open so that I could be delivered to the side and not have to go through this bunch of newshawks. Anyway, after I got out, why, of course, the stories were... You know, everybody in the press and everybody wanted to find out what was going on, you know, how I fared and all that stuff, American colony, etc. Then they immediately put police around my house and all that stuff and the Governor came over. After about twenty-four hours, there was a real nice American that lived out on the lake, Chapala and he said, "Why don't you come out here and get away from this or a while." And I wanted a place where I could go and write this thing up - a lot of it - while it was fresh in my mind. So I accepted his offer. He said, "I'll leave all my household servants. I'm going to be away and you just take over." I went out there; I had a police escort and all that stuff, you know, where I could sit back and think while it was fresh in my mind and get it down on paper.

But we had a funny guy came in right after I got back and he said he was a representative of the federal police and he had no uniform on, but he passed muster with the other police who let him in, so I assumed he was the guy he said he was. He would stay there in the daytime and then he took off. I was there about two days before I went out to the lake. Then he went out there to the lake and then he disappeared at night. The next day, the DEA guy came out, my friend, and he said, "You know that guy's a complete impostor." But he wasn't dangerous. But anyway, one of the things I wanted to do afterwards was to try to put the finger on these guys and give as much information as I could to their police authorities and I was interviewed at least by eight different groups - there was the military, and the federal police, and the local police, and other groups, and I told them the same story. I said, "I'm pretty sure..."

The other thing I should say, within a day afterwards, one of the CIA guys from Mexico City came down who was working with the federal police and they had me in a hooded type car with no windows except right in the front, and took me around in the area where I thought I'd been stashed and I said it had to be right next to a church. They were having May devotions and they were ringing the bell every morning, you know. And they went around to this old priest and he said, "Oh, we don't ring any bells here." Well, it turned out they had been ringing bells but he was scared, I think. He didn't want to... And there had to be some families in the area with kids; I could hear these kids all the time, and of course, the railroad and the highway, and so forth, so I knew just about where I was. And we were with within about half a block of there it turned out later when I did find the place, where this incident took place and these guys were in there for several weeks later, I found out. But anyway, the police effort was not very good and I was very, very upset with the fact that, with the information I gave them, that they couldn't find these guys. But anyway, I went out and did my writing and then the Department said, "We'd like to get you back to the States for some rest and recreation." They said, "Where would you like to go?" And I said, "Well, I'd like to go to Montana." And this was in May when it was still kind of chilly out there but we had friends that had a ranch in a resort complex and we knew they'd be glad to put us up. So we flew up to Montana and spent about a couple of weeks. When I returned to the Department, I got what I call the "leper treatment." I have friends that have gone through this same thing and you're just dirt after this happens. They don't know what to do with you. Of course, I was near my retirement, but this attitude is hard to believe.

Q: It is really hard to believe that this was very much the attitude at that time.

LEONHARDY: First, also I should say, going back when I was still in Guadalajara, they said, "Do you want to come out or do you want to stay there?" I said, "I want to stay here." I said, "I think the chances of this happening again are pretty remote," and I said, "I like Guadalajara." I wanted to stay there until my retirement which was another year or so off. So they implied that they were going to let me stay there but when I get into Washington, they changed their mind. They said, "You got to come out. We couldn't have this happening again" and all this stuff. But they did give me another four months, they said three or four months. So I went. Another interesting aspect, even before I went up to the States, was the Governor came in to me and he said, "Look, I had to go get those million pesos out of the bank. Who's going to reimburse me?" I said, "Well..." He says, "Don't you think the American colony here might be able to..." And I said, "I'm sure they'd be glad to. Get a big thing going and collect money from people and pay you off." "But," I said, "I got to check with the Embassy first." So I checked with the Embassy (this is before I went up to the States) and they said, "Don't do anything, we'll take it up with the federal government, the Foreign Office." So I went off to the States and when I came back why the Governor came over to see me, he says, "Whatever happened?" And I said, "They said it will be taken care of, or something like that. Don't worry about it." And I said, "Well, I assumed that everything would..." He says, "Well, I haven't heard anything." So I called the Embassy again and finally they came back and said that the Foreign Office said you can just forget about it, you know.

But anyway, after I'm there for four months, I leave in September and there were a number of farewell parties given for us before we left and I was over at one of these big receptions one night and the highest official in the Mexican Government next, to the President, the Secretary of Interior who is in charge of all the police, called me at this party and he interrupted this party - it was in the evening - and he says, "I want you to be the first to know that we captured two of the people who were involved in your kidnaping." And I said, in Spanish, I told him, "Well, Mr. Minister, I'm so happy to hear that." I said, "That you finally (I used the word finally) caught somebody." And he choked a little bit on that, then he said, "Would you be willing to come to the federal building tomorrow," (They were in Mexico City; they were going to bring them down) "to help identify them?" I said, "I'd be very happy to."

So my wife and I went over to this new federal building and you'd think being a new building, they'd have an area where you could look at people in a one-way glass, you know. But instead they had me peeking through cracks in doors and stuff and they brought these two guys out separately and one was the guy that blocked my way and he looked a bit oriental and it turns out he was part Chinese. Then the other one that came in from my left with the automatic pistol, he was the other one. During the four months, they'd let their hair grow out, beards and stuff, but they were clean-shaven when I saw them, especially the guy that blocked my way. So I asked them, "You got to bring a barber in here and do a little work on these guys; otherwise I can't help you." So that delayed the process and my wife had to go back home for some reason, so then they brought them back in after the barber had come in and given them a haircut and shaved them. So I said, "Well, the first guy they brought in was the guy that blocked my way." And I said, "I got to see him from his left side." And they had a situation where I could only see him from the right side. So then they had to change the venue and they took them away and brought me into another office where I could look through a crack in the door and see this guy from the left side. And then they brought the other guy in. They had, I must say, they had one of their top prosecutors from Mexico City, federal prosecutors, involved in this case, a very nice guy, and he said, after they took them away, "Well, how do you feel?" I said, "Well, I'm about ninety percent sure of the first guy and about fifty percent on the second." He said, "Can't you make it a hundred?" I said, "No, it's the best I can do."

Then they had a line-up and they had about twelve guys and they had these two guys interspersed. Under Mexican jurisprudence, you got to go up and put your hand on their shoulder, a Judas touch, and I had to do that with both of these guys. I must say, before they ever brought these guys in, they had me read all of their confessions - copies of the interrogations - so that helped a lot to make me feel a little better. But anyway, I still was uncertain and I agonized the whole night. The next day they took me out to the place where they had me stashed and then I knew that they had to be the people because they took me up the circular staircase and the room. This room... I must say another thing, they took the blindfold off me when they were writing the letters, I noticed that they had newspapers covering the windows and I read the headlines of these newspapers and I could get a feel for the approximate date of the papers, and so forth, which I also passed on to the police, and so forth. Then I could see the step up into the bathroom but everything jived as to how I remembered it. So I felt better about my putting the finger on these guys.

Anyway, I went into the Director-General's office, I forget who it was at the time, I was not very impressed by the guy, and first of all, he says, "We think you ought to retire," or something like that, you know pushing me. And I said, "No, I'm not ready yet." And then they threw out the possibility of a Diplomat-in-Residence. Anyway, when I was in the Department, they threw up this possibility of my going as a Diplomat-in-Residence, and they had three or four colleges that I could choose from which was good. One of them was Thunderbird Graduate School in Arizona and I knew some of the people out there from my time on the border and I had a high respect for the place and I thought that'll be a nice decompression area. So I accepted that and I'm glad I did because it was a good experience. They were so nice to me up there; they had a house on the campus - a not very big one but we were able to have one of our maids from Salvador that we'd brought up to Guadalajara, she came up with us and unfortunately it was the year when the Arab oil crisis, and distances are long in Arizona, so we were pretty well confined to home. Then I picked up valley fever when I was there so I couldn't teach the first semester but I taught the second semester. I taught a course - a sort of a made-up course, shall we say, on Latin American economic development, I think it was - country by country. So my retirement age came in the Spring but I was just about to finish there so it worked out real well. Anyway, that's the story, pretty much, of Guadalajara.

Q: Where were these people coming from politically?

LEONHARDY: Well, another very interesting facet and really crucial to this whole release of mine was the fact that the President's wife's brothers controlled the whole southern half of Jalisco, they were extreme leftists. Her father had been a Governor in Jalisco State and was an extreme leftist and the brothers were in all kinds of shoot-outs, killings, and everything else.

Q: Who was the President?

LEONHARDY: The President was Echeverria.

Q: Who was no great friend of the United States.

LEONHARDY: No, he was... I would like to go on a little bit about him. But anyway, everybody in Guadalajara after I got out, or a lot of my friends - Mexican friends - said, "Well, the reason you got out so fast and everything," (can you imagine, the day before a holiday having this happening, nobody waking up until Monday, they got all these prisoners from all over Mexico in Cuba on Sunday afternoon), "the President pushed the button. And why did he push the button? The reason he pushed the button was that he thought his in-laws could be involved in this thing and he just couldn't have that happening." At first, I didn't quite accept that, and I had a lot of good friends all over Mexico, from my time in Mexico City and on the border, and so forth, and I figured that the fact that I was well-known in the Mexican community helped me but then I come to accept the fact that this guy had to have pushed the button because he thought his in-laws were involved. They were the Zuno family. Anyway, after I got out and after I retired, I went down on several business missions to Mexico and I got little pieces of information about this whole affair from people in different areas of the country but up in Sonora where I'd been stationed, I still had good friends.

Just as one example, I went down there on a purebred race horse-selling operation with a guy and we talked to the Dodge dealer in Navojoa, Mexico, which is in the southern part of the state, who was an old friend of mine. He wanted to take me out to a place... I didn't realize that that's where they raised most of these horses. And so he took us out to this place where this horse ranch was and he said, "Now, if the head groom or the guy that runs the place is there, when I introduce you, if he blinks a couple times, the reason is that his daughter was involved in your kidnaping." I knew there were women in there. He wasn't there, fortunately. Then, maybe a year later, I was having lunch with a banker friend of mine in Hermosillo, the capital of the state, and he said, "You know, the weekend you were kidnaped, I was playing golf with the head of the military complex out here, a general," and he said, "we were on about the sixth hole and out comes his orderly and said, 'You're wanted immediately back to headquarters.'" And he said, "What!? A holiday weekend? What's going on? Nothing ever happens, you know." Then, "orders are orders," you know, so he goes back. His order was to get, this was on Saturday, to get this guy out of jail that was in jail because he killed a military officer, I guess, he was in for life or something, I don't know, get him out of jail and get him to Mexico City, fifteen hundred kilometers away right toute suite. Charter a plane, get him down here and you accompany him. And this guy was so mad, he says, "I have to ruin my whole weekend on my golf course for this damn gringo." But that's another story of the types of things that went on after the... that would come back and get hit with. But anyway, the other interesting thing is that they sent a guy down right after I got out, from Mexico City, public health officer at the Embassy to give me a physical, you know, once over very lightly, you know, check your pulse, a few little things like that. He said, "You'll get a good, thorough physical when you get up to the Department." No way. You know what they do with these guys that are kidnaped in the Mideast. They bring them into Germany and they run them through the mill. Nothing. I got no physical exam at all.

Q: Did the Ambassador have any words, I mean, see you after this... Did the Ambassador see you at all?

LEONHARDY: I saw him afterwards. He only... Another interesting thing is that the two guys - they had the consul general from Monterrey and then they had this press officer from the Embassy - these guys were hitting the bottle in our house like nothing and the only guy that had any sanity in the group was a fellow named Freeman Matthews who was a political officer in the Embassy - a real, nice fellow, a good friend. But when they came over to pick me up, I could understand everything the two guys said, the DEA guy and the local, but the Consul General from Monterrey was incomprehensible. I couldn't understand anything. Well, I didn't realize until afterwards that he was drunk. He sent a report into Washington that I was found at a bar surrounded by women. And here were two lovely old ladies that were so nice and it was their own private home, you know. This idiot... And a report came out up here and I said, "Where in the hell did that ever come from?" Any it wasn't until many months later that I found out that he'd sent a communication up there to that effect. Then the guy that was handling the press, he was almost worthless, too, just terrible. But, thank God, I had a good... The DEA guy couldn't have been better, a close friend, and this local Mexican was so good but the rest of them were... I remember now the guy's name that was up in Mexico City; his name was Vic Dikeos and he was later brought up to Washington to head up Security. It was just sad, I mean, I had very little respect for the guy. He was a pleasant guy to talk to but he was just ineffective and, of course, I'll never forget the fact that...

Oh, the other important thing is that one of the FBI guys in the Embassy - we weren't close friends but we were good friends - and I saw him later. I think he came down to Guadalajara or something and he said, "You never got the information that this could happen?" I said, "No." I said, "If I'd known, I'd just call the Governor and get a police escort, you know. He says, "Well," he says, "I was at the meeting in the secret room - the glass cage - and," he said, "when they got a warning that something could happen in one of our consular operations and a possible kidnaping." And I'd got an inkling from the guy that came down to fix the locks, you know, but I didn't pay any attention to it because I said, "They would have called me." So he said, "They started talking about what they should be doing to protect people and all they talked about was protecting ourselves - those of us in the room here." And the FBI guy who's this friend of mine says, "What about the guys out in the boonies?" because it could have happened in the Embassy, that was the other thing. "What about the guys in the boonies?" "Eh, we'll get word down to them or something." Well, the word never came.

So it could have been easily prevented and they had the intelligence that it could have happened and the thing that my wife was worried about more than anything else was that the drug people had gotten me because I'd told the Governor about this incident. Well, she was in the States, she had an awful time getting back to Guadalajara from Denver. She was in Denver to Guadalajara. She had to go down to - the air flights weren't that frequent and she had to go down to El Paso and cross over to somewhere else and San Antonio and then down. But anyway, about, oh, two or three days after this happened, our oldest daughter was about five. She was watching television, we had some company in the house, and she come running out and she said, "Mommy, Daddy, you're on television and kissing each other." And she says, "You remember that big party you had here, and Daddy came in late." But the amount of alcohol consumed around that place was rather sickening when you have something like that happening, and you lose respect for some of your colleagues from that, you know, and I certainly did. I'm trying to think of the name of our ambassador, he was a career... His name was Robert McBride. Then the DCM who wasn't much better was Bob Dean. But I don't know whether any of this is going to... Maybe I'll get some lawsuits over this.

Q: Well, you can take a look at it. I don't think, I mean, these are public figures.

LEONHARDY: Yes, right.

Then I went up as Diplomat-in-Residence at Thunderbird Graduate School in Arizona, where my daughter just graduated in December. She was in nursing school at the time and then she was graduated from there in December last year.

Q: And after you left there, you went where?

LEONHARDY: Well, after that I retired. My retirement age came, I think, in about April and I stayed on there until June and came back here.

Q: Okay, did you ever get called back in or anything like that?

LEONHARDY: No. I didn't work on those declassification projects or anything.

Q: Well, thank you very much. I appreciate this.

End of interview